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The Attrition of Newspaper and TV Voices Which the Justice Department and the FCC Don't Prevent and the Media Won't Report

Stephen R. Barnett

COALITION FOR A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

The Operators Make Their Play

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

Norman Mailer: *St. George and the Godfather*

Robert Solotaroff

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LETTERS

unique islanders

Cook, Wash.

DEAR SIRS: Your editorial, "Puerto Rico Votes" [Nov. 27] has lately come to my attention. The statement is made that "luring more U.S. investment by tax exemptions and other inducements is not the answer to Puerto Rico's economic problems."

Indeed, another island, St. Thomas, shows the poverty of this approach, in a territory more closely tied to the mainland. The sorry history of pollution through oil spills and overdevelopment through "enhancing touristic values" has sadly blighted the charm of one of the architecturally unique areas of the United States.

The people of the islands are caught in a double bind: inflated costs due to geographical location and the fact that it is a tourist attraction; and limited employment opportunities because investment has not kept pace with the amount of job seekers in the market.

It seems to be a universal fact that in the islands wages are low and living costs are high. Perhaps we need special programs which recognize this fact and which view islanders as unique people with unique problems who need unique treatment.

Philip A. Ternahan

is he sick?

Denver, Colo.

DEAR SIRS: As a native American (I am part Cherokee) I dissociate myself from any responsibility for Nixon's savagery and barbarism in Vietnam. His policy is a direct extension of the genocidal policy carried out against American Indians. The possibility has been suggested in the past—and I would like to raise it again—that Nixon is sick. In any event, it is time to give the most serious consideration to impeachment proceedings.

Raymond Rector
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
University of Denver

no mere imperfection

Nyack, N.Y.

DEAR SIRS: We were amused to find the name of our organization, Dai Dong, spat out like an invective in the melee over the environment depicted by Dutch cartoonist Behrendt [*The Nation*, Nov. 27]. Dai Dong is actually not an invective but a Chinese phrase meaning "world of togetherness," and it is the name of a project of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, which sponsored an independent conference on the environment parallel to UNCHE in Stockholm last June. The cartoon apparently illustrates the foolish behavior of "all our doomsday prophets," whom S. Fred Singer, in the article of above date, "Do We Dare to Grow?," chides for advocating the cessation, in already industrialized countries, of further economic growth. . . . His article is disturbingly naive. He trusts in the self-regulating feedback of the market to fix things up, if only government will confine itself "to maintaining a free market and removing what I would call 'imperfections' of the marketplace." A marketplace dominated by conglomerate and multinational corporations bears no resemblance to the "free market" of which Singer wistfully dreams. Nowhere in his apology for Band-Aid patched laissez-faire capitalism and growth does Singer ask the crucial question, growth for what? Nowhere does he question the goals of an economic growth which is based on profit and artificially created "needs" to stimulate expanded consumption. The environmental crisis is no mere "imperfection." It is the symptom of deep systemic disorder which Singer doesn't touch.

Tom Artin
Assistant Director, Dai Dong

EDITORIALS

The Head Coach Analogue

The Nixon watchers—and they are legion—have been busier than usual during the holidays, searching for clues and insights that might help explain why the President has been waging "war by tantrum" and otherwise behaving like a spoiled and petulant bully. The message he has been projecting, as one State Department official told *Newsweek*, "is simple: 'It's not nice to fool around with Richard Nixon.'" The current frenzied search for clues has taken the watchers needlessly far afield; revealing evidence was to be found in the sports pages of the nation's press. For the most unambiguous statement that can be made about the President's recent political behavior is that he exhibits the values and outlook of a successful head coach; he admires winners and scorns losers.

On New Year's Day, we expect a thoughtful message from the Chief Executive, but this year Mr. Nixon decided to project not a message but an image. Alone in the White House—Mrs. Nixon was in the stands at Pasadena viewing the USC-Ohio State collision—he summoned George Allen, coach of the Washington Redskins, his wife, four children and the Allens' in-laws to the Oval Room. There he chatted with Allen about football, gave him a pin bearing the Presidential Seal and asked him to deliver a letter to the invalid daughter of the Redskins' quarterback. Allen, who has a legendary reputation as a tough guy, win-at-any-cost coach, once coached at Whittier College, the President's alma mater. At the year-end meeting, as in the past, the President was eager to exhibit his admiration for precisely those qualities for which Allen is best known. In typical Nixon style, however, "virtually all of the conversation with Allen was confidential. Newsmen were not permitted to ask questions" (*The New York Times*, sports section, January 2). But the President did say—and was quite willing to be quoted as saying—that he "always roots for the home team."

The symbolic message was clear: everyone should love and admire the winner; losers are despicable; and the "home team" comes first. As Woody Hayes, another famous head coach, is said to have once remarked: "Show me a man who has nice things to say about a loser and I will show you a loser." This, in essence, is what the President had to say about Senator McGovern after the election. So there really is not much point in the watchers thumbing through volumes about Woodrow Wilson, Charles de Gaulle and Benjamin Disraeli—statesmen the President is said to admire—for clues to his recent political behavior. Even a casual study of the head coach analogue would be more rewarding.

Mr. Nixon's Quietus

From the ongoing speculation about what went wrong when and why, with the cease-fire negotiations, a curious non sequitur emerges. Could it be, the commentator ask, that President Nixon never really wanted a set

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tlement along the lines that Kissinger outlined in his first press briefing? Was the whole negotiating affair, as Senator McGovern has charged, an electioneering fraud foisted on the public by the President? With virtual unanimity, the commentators answer "absolutely not," and they fasten on the same consideration. It was, they argue, Hanoi, not Washington, that first brought the negotiations forward by concessions made early in October, and it was Hanoi, not Washington, that first revealed in any detail the terms of the proposed cease-fire agreement. Kissinger, it will be recalled, has acknowledged that the Hanoi radio broadcast provided a "fair description" of the terms. Therefore, argue the commentators, acceptance of Senator McGovern's allegation would require one to believe that Kissinger and the North Vietnamese conspired, at least in the timing of statements, to assure Mr. Nixon's re-election, and any such assumption is unthinkable or, as Kissinger has said, "unworthy."

But without implying the existence of a conspiracy or even any collusion in the timing, it is obvious that the North Vietnamese wanted the terms of the agreement known to the world before the election, if only to force Mr. Nixon to accept or repudiate them. One commentator, Josiah Lee Auspitz (in *The Washington Post*), has spotted the non sequitur in the argument. He writes:

> The negotiations were carried out in an atmosphere in which both sides knew that a pre-election agreement was best for North Vietnam. If Mr. Nixon won re-election there would be little to stop him from continuing a war of aerial bombardment. A pre-election quietus on the war front was important to Mr. Nixon, whose own data told him even after the Democratic convention that his support was soft. . . . Thus the North Vietnamese wanted a signed agreement; Mr. Nixon wanted a quietus. The October 26th press conference was his way of telling them that though he got his quietus, they wouldn't get his signature. The October 31 date on which they thought he had promised to sign a peace was now off. They had been had. The President had now begun to consult those whose advice he had neglected during the period when he needed the quietus.

To be sure, this reading of the "signs" is conjectural; no firm conclusion can be reached until, if ever, the full record of the negotiations is disclosed. But an excellent report by Jules Witcover (*Los Angeles Times*, December 29) "On How Nixon Did It," based largely on Republican sources, strikingly confirms the existence of a close link between Kissinger's "peace is at hand" press conference and the impending election. The Nixon command, he reports, was terribly shaken up by the Watergate affair; it was their major concern. Then, at the precise moment when Senator McGovern was swinging his hardest blows at the President about the scandal, and when new charges of sabotage and espionage had just been published, Radio Hanoi on October 26 announced that a peace agreement had been reached. Some of Nixon's advisers feared the effect of the Hanoi broadcast; it might be interpreted, they foresaw, as a political ploy, coming as it did on the eve of the election. But other advisers seized upon it as a great opportunity to douse the Watergate

IN THIS ISSUE

January 15, 1973

EDITORIALS

66

71 Population: Problem for the Populace
Hugh Downs

ARTICLES

72 Coalition for a Democratic Majority: The Operators Make Their Play
Irving Louis Horowitz

76 Merger, Monopoly & A Free Press
Stephen R. Barnett

BOOKS & THE ARTS

87 Mailer: St. George and the Godfather
Robert Solotaroff

88 The Lake of the Woods (poem)
Richard Ryan

89 Rowse: The Elizabethan Renaissance
Seymour Kleinberg

89 Black Out (poem)
Patricia Goedicke

90 Singer: Enemies, A Love Story
Robin MacNaughton

90 Behind the Moon (poem)
Carolyn Stoloff

91 Bassani: Behind the Door
Charles Lam Markmann

92 Van Ostaijen: Patriotism, Inc. and Other Tales
Ronald De Feo

92 The Falling Apart of Time (poem)
Barry Wallenstein

93 Films
Robert Hatch

94 Raggedy Andy (poem)
M. Steingesser

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fires. On the morning of October 26, Kissinger staged his "peace is at hand" briefing. In an account to Witcover of things that had been done to counter the Watergate scandal, a member of Nixon's "attack group" said: "Try 'peace is at hand.' We can thank Watergate for that." And Clark MacGregor acknowledged to Witcover that he saw Nixon at a White House breakfast that morning of the Hanoi broadcast. "I told him I felt it would be very helpful—if Henry felt he could—to speak in some detail of the Hanoi report." Henry felt he could and did.

Old Brass

At the time of the Bay of Pigs adventure, President John F. Kennedy is reported to have become so exasperated with a group of Navy admirals—who assured him that they knew how to handle the Cuban blockade since they had been doing that kind of thing since John Paul Jones—that he remarked that the U.S. Navy hadn't learned anything new *since* John Paul Jones.

Now the Navy faces a different crisis. The Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Elmo R. Zumwalt, is trying to respond to the demands of the modern era with innovative leadership, and he appears to be getting less than full cooperation from the tradition-encrusted Navy brass.

Up until World War II, there was not a single black officer in the U.S. Navy, and the only jobs for which blacks were eligible were cooks, stewards and mess personnel, very often as servants to officers. Admiral Zumwalt obviously recognizes that the U.S. Navy can no longer continue as the racist institution that it has been since time immemorial, and that more than token change is imperative. Not only has there been vigorous recruitment of black officers and the long overdue appointment of the first black rear admiral, but the CNO has directed that race relations, particularly at the enlisted level, must be a prime concern of all commanders.

His recent stern lecture to several dozen top officers, criticizing them for giving little more than lip service to the Navy's race relations policy, was front-page news. There are reports that black officers, assigned as race relations advisers to commanding officers of ships and shore installations, are ignored when they propose affirmative programs to upgrade the training and morale of black seamen, but then summoned in to try to head off the inevitable confrontations. If the entire Naval officer corps were as committed to equal opportunity as their Chief, the racial disturbances on board the *Constellation* and the *Kitty Hawk* might perhaps have been avoided.

Admiral Zumwalt has also responded in a humane, common-sense fashion to the demands of young recruits —white and black—to be allowed more tolerance for individual life style. Many of the "Mickey Mouse" regulations, such as those prohibiting beards, have been abandoned. Moreover, under Admiral Zumwalt's administration, the Navy has taken some tentative steps to redress the lack of equal opportunity for women. Women officers have been promoted and given command responsibilities, and, over considerable opposition, the first women have been assigned to regular sea duty.

The Zumwalt reforms which have probably most traumatized the retired admirals and captains in the Navy clubs in San Diego and Newport are those which affect "command and control" traditions. Since ancient times, the captain of the ship has been invested with more power over the lives of all on board than normally obtains in military command situations. Maybe this was justifiable in the days of John Paul Jones, but—to cite one example —it makes little sense today to put all authority over shore leave for a crew of 5,000 in the hands of one man. By distributing a modest amount of decentralized authority to intermediate officers, Admiral Zumwalt has simply applied rational management systems to increasingly complex operations.

Admiral Rickover once observed, reflecting upon the obstinate resistance he encountered from traditionalists, that there is an inertia of the mind, comparable to the inertia of matter. In attempting to overcome this inertia and resistance, passive and otherwise, Admiral Zumwalt has stepped on some toes, and undoubtedly offended many in high places, perhaps civilians as well as military.

Nevertheless, what he is doing is clearly in the national interest and should have the support of all Americans, and not just persons concerned with military and naval developments. Few will deny that our armed services, reflecting the condition of the country, are beset with racial injustice, intolerance of youth, discrimination against women, and an increasing feeling of the remoteness of governing authority. The efforts of the Chief of Naval Operations to show concern and generate action should be applauded, not torpedoed.

MARVIN M. KARPATKIN

Worse Than Silence

Everything seemed quiet along the Potomac. The President was in Key Biscayne for most of the week. Kissinger went to a football game (Washington Redskins, natch) and then left for Palm Springs. General Haig was "on leave." Melvin Laird was in Hawaii. Ronald Ziegler was on vacation in California. But the Administration is not without a sense of humor: it had left the hapless Jerry W. Friedheim, the Pentagon's spokesman, in Washington to answer questions about bombings, ruptured peace talks and similar trivia. He could have refused to meet with reporters, or he could have answered every question with "no comment," or he could have simply said that he was not authorized to answer questions on certain subjects. Instead he sat on a table's edge, dangling his legs, staring down at the floor, and mumbled double talk to the questions of "Bob" and "Dick" and "Pete" to whom, of course, he was "Jerry."

Friedheim obviously did not enjoy the assignment and his performance, apart from his answers, was dismal. The date was January 2 and by then the entire world knew about the bombing of Bach Mai Hospital in Hanoi, after he had denied the damage on December 27 and again on December 29. Gen. Telford Taylor, in a dispatch to *The New York Times*, had confirmed that the hospital had been hit on December 25. Yet here is Friedheim's answer to a question put by "Bob": "It appears that some limited accidental damage has occurred at some facilities at Gia Lam Airport and at

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a hospital the enemy calls Bach Mai. The exact extent of this damage is uncertain, as is its cause. Our information does not square with Hanoi's propaganda claims of massive destruction at these sites."

Previously he had denied that American bombs had hit a 1,000-bed hospital. The Bach Mai had 950 beds. Previously he was not quite sure what, if anything, had hit the hospital. It might have been downed North Vietnamese or American aircraft or falling antiaircraft missiles—or, he might have added, a falling meteor. On the same day, the Rev. Michael Allen, associate dean of the Yale Divinity School, who had just returned from Hanoi, said of the Bach Mai Hospital: "By all standards I know the hospital was destroyed." Friedheim's performance on January 2 was offensive on two counts: no one likes to be lied to, particularly when the facts are well known, but to be lied to in such a stupid, pettifogging fashion compounds the offense. The real villains, however, were the top-level officials who abandoned Washington for holiday retreats West and South and left behind this abject, lugubrious flunky as their stand-in.

Ramsey Clark, Julian Bond, Patricia Simon and others have launched a campaign to raise funds to rebuild Bach Mai Hospital. It would be difficult to imagine, at the moment, a more worthy cause. Contributions can be sent to Bach Mai Hospital Emergency Relief Fund, 140 6th Street, Cambridge, Mass. 02142.

Triangula Invades North Ogden

The Nation depends on its friends around the country to call the attention of the editors to especially resounding instances of patriotic indoctrination, such as the one reported in the Eugene, Ore. *Register-Guard*. In mid-December, the Associated Press reported from North Ogden, Utah (with scant attention, if any, in the effete East) that troops armed with automatic weapons had policed the corridors of the local junior high school for three days in "a frighteningly realistic lesson in life without freedom."

These were real soldiers—disguised volunteers from the 683rd Artillery Unit of the U.S. Army Reserves, commanded by Col. Clair Frischknecht—and they took over the school at the behest of Principal Carl C. DeYoung. It was not that the students had been rioting or trying to overthrow the government with subversive literature—quite the opposite. A "flag boy" had complained to the principal that many students appeared "apathetic" during flag-raising ceremonies each morning, and Mr. DeYoung decided that a lesson in patriotism must be inculcated in his young charges—with automatic weapons.

The troops were represented as an invasion force from the mythical foreign power of Triangula and they imposed authoritarian law and order on the student body. "Brusk (*sic*) military trials were held . . . when students violated a tough set of rules handed out by the occupation force." The rules required the students to sit at attention all day and to stand at attention when reciting. Accused violators were assured by Colonel Frischknecht, "We'll give you a chance to plead your case before we find you guilty." Punishment typically was a cleanup detail, but AP fails to tell us what happened to hard-core subversives who refused to clean up. It would have been a good lesson if they had been shot at sunrise, or just informally, as at Kent State, Jackson State and more recently in Louisiana, but apparently the Principal and the Colonel tempered justice with mercy. Besides, the parents of the guilty children might have objected.

The lesson could have been driven home, however, by showing the American kids films of North Vietnamese kids blown to pieces by the freedom-loving Strategic Air Force. In the absence of such exhibits, the children evidently assumed that the automatic weapons were not loaded and, the AP reports, they "reacted with everything from skepticism to near revolt." Despite this recalcitrance, maybe the North Ogden experiment was a fitting preparation for the Second Centennial celebration. Why limit the lesson to high school students? Why not drag adults into the nearest armory and make them stand at attention for a day or two at the muzzles of machine guns? That would teach them to appreciate the blessings of freedom, and relieve the tedium of reserve duty.

Double Cross in the Caribbean

Contempt for the rights, welfare and even lives of peoples less powerful than ourselves now seems characteristic of American behavior abroad. Vietnam is, of course, the obvious example, but the attitude is general. We have earned an international reputation for ruthlessness and unreliability in our dealings with other peoples, and we do not seem to care.

Culebra, a tiny island belonging to Puerto Rico, is the most recent case in point. For some years, the U.S. Navy has used it as an artillery range, to the growing indignation and alarm of its 700-odd natives and of Puerto Ricans generally (see "Culebra: Island Besieged," by Robert Swann, *The Nation*, March 1, 1971). In response to rising protests, the Pentagon on April 1, 1971, made a formal commitment to announce by the end of 1972 where it would relocate this firing range.

Nevertheless, in the recent Puerto Rican election campaign, the Navy quite openly supported the incumbent Gov. Luís Alberto Ferré against his opponent Rafael Hernandez Colón, it being thought that the former would not press as vigorously as the newcomer for the restored integrity of Culebra. (See "Puerto Rico Votes"; *Nation* editorial, November 27, 1972.) It is worth noting that Ferré's New Progressive Party is linked to the mainland GOP, whereas Colón's Popular Democrats are affiliated with the Democratic Party in the States.

Colón won the election by a landslide; whereupon, and almost immediately, Secretary of Defense Laird announced that, despite earlier assurances that the Navy would quit Culebra by 1975, the gunnery would go on there until 1985, and would increase in volume. In a public relations blunder, caused by ineptitude or indifference, Laird chose to make this announcement almost at the moment of the new Governor's inauguration,

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when his inevitable protest would receive the maximum world attention. Other eminent Puerto Ricans have joined their voices to his, including Jaime Benitez, the island's newly elected resident commissioner in Washington, who with uncharacteristic Latin understatement has called the Pentagon announcement "equivalent to an apple of discord" between the Commonwealth and the United States.

Culebra is not a major international issue; no one is going to take up arms in its cause. And in time, since the Puerto Ricans are a vigorous people with a newfound pride in their country, the Navy will be prevailed upon to leave Culebra in peace. But the incident is brutal and it is stupid; if Americans have any pride in themselves, it will rankle.

Advocating the Free Ride

Free public transportation is no longer in the realm of fantasy. It has been advocated or is under study in New York, Chicago, San Francisco, Atlanta, Sacramento, Los Angeles and other cities. It is being seriously considered because of the inefficiency and social cost of dependence on the automobile; the rising cost of commercial public transportation (which is no less commercial when administered by a public transit authority); and recognition of the fact that transit is a public service no less vital than police and fire protection.

One of the prime movers in this area is Councilman Ernani Bernardi, who represents the Seventh District of Los Angeles. Like several other cities, Los Angeles is in a something-must-be-done transit situation. It is becoming clear that lowered automobile pollution levels alone will not solve the problem of air pollution—the number of cars in urban transit must be reduced. One Los Angeles proposal is a 14-mile subway-and-elevated system which would cost upward of $400 million. Fixed line transit (subway or train) is the fastest way of getting people from one point to another near the line, but Bernardi favors making a start in free transportation with more mobile bus service, which he feels will better suit a metropolis as spread out as Los Angeles. People living in the Watts area, which is particularly in need of improved transit facilities, go to their jobs in all directions, not just into downtown Los Angeles; and a study of the destinations of the nearly 700,000 vehicles leaving the San Fernando Valley daily shows that about 90,000 come downtown, 64,000 go to the Santa Monica-Venice area, 68,000 to Beverly Hills and West Los Angeles, 143,000 to Hollywood—and that accounts for only half of the traffic.

Bernardi cites data to the effect that a mere 4 per cent increase in bus traffic doubles the capacity of a highway. Present bus systems, however, are largely ineffectual. Then, in a quasi-free country with enormous vested interests in car manufacture and servicing, and in highway construction, there is always the question of whether commuters will abandon their cars for public transport. Experimentation with fare-free bus transit might supply an answer.

The general concept of free public transportation is under active discussion among Bernardi, the Southern California Rapid Transit District, the federal Department of Transportation and other agencies and individuals. The present chaotic transit conditions satisfy no one, and are especially hard on the poor and disadvantaged, and on young people. A rapid conversion from cars to mass transit is needed. "An incentive approach," Bernardi argues, "which recognizes *the true social cost of the car* by making mass transit free is the most direct way to encourage rapid conversion." Los Angeles, as the citadel of the private automobile, is probably the most suitable metropolis in which to make a start toward this objective.

Prospects for SALT-2

"There is little doubt," says Prof. Wolfgang Panofsky of Stanford University, that the first round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-1) "has increased the security of both the Soviet Union and the United States, even in a strictly military sense." This represents a welcome reversal of the compulsive trend toward ever higher costs for strategic weapons, accompanied by a loss of security for both the Soviet Union and the United States, as well as the nations on the sidelines. "Yet," Professor Panofsky adds, "the burdensome military costs have not as yet been reduced and the arms race has been deflected, not arrested."

Panofsky is as good a judge of such matters as we possess. He is a high-energy physicist who directs the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, and a former U.S. arms control negotiator and consultant to the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. All his past comments bear the stamp of wide experience and sound evaluation.

He sets three goals for SALT-2: (*1*) SALT-1 omitted aircraft. Quantitative limits should be imposed on *all* strategic arms. (*2*) Technological improvements on existing missiles should be curbed. (*3*) Reduction of force levels from the current "overkill" levels.

Panofsky is relatively optimistic on the first two, less so on the third, at least for the immediate future. *The Nation* is less hopeful on the second, because of the enormous vested interest in military research and development in the United States, and no doubt in the Soviet Union. Panofsky believes that the Soviet system tends to be at least as susceptible to "the inertia of established institutions" as is that of the United States. He points out, moreover, that the Soviet strategic missile forces are under a command structure separate from the rest of the Soviet armed forces. A countervailing force, stronger in the Soviet Union, is the economic burden—Khrushchev aptly called the armament industry "the steel eaters." The American steel industry welcomes business from the military.

Another factor favoring significant accomplishment by SALT-2 is the relaxation of tensions between the United States and the USSR and the promise of increased trade. The Soviets are obviously eager to import American technology as well as American products. The crucial question is whether the American negotiators will regard this as an opportunity to curb the strategic arms race, with concessions by both sides, or whether they will see it as an opportunity to put the squeeze on the Russians. Which option is chosen depends more on President Nixon than on the negotiators.

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POPULATION: PROBLEM FOR THE POPULACE

In recent years, Presidents have created prestigious commissions at the rate of three or four a year to investigate problems of national importance. Sometimes these groups are appointed in a time of crisis—for example, the Warren Commission, created to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy, or the Kerner Commission on Civil Disorders—and their names become household words. On frequent other occasions they are asked to provide technical advice and they, and their findings, usually go unnoticed. Who remembers the Knight Commission on Libraries or the Kappel Commission on Postal Organization?

There seems now to be a growing cynicism that all Presidential commissions—those asked to solve an immediately critical problem and those formed to provide exhaustive research on problems of long-range national concern—accomplish little more than the accumulation of massive data to be shelved and forgotten. As Sen. Edward Kennedy said at the opening of hearings he chaired on the subject, "It seems as though most Presidential commissions are merely so many Jiminy Crickets chirping in the ears of deaf Presidents, deaf officials, deaf Congressmen and, perhaps, a deaf public. They could be the nation's conscience, spurring us on to what we know ought to be done, showing us the way, strengthening our determination to build a just and peaceful and productive society."

Now, for the first time in history, a national commission is attempting to communicate its findings and recommendations directly to the American people. The Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, appointed by President Nixon in March 1970, felt that since it was mandated to report to the general public, and since its findings were of vital concern to all citizens, it would best fulfill its duty by taking those findings beyond just the President and the Congress. Therefore, before this commission issued its final report in March 1972, its members agreed unanimously to form the Citizens' Committee on Population and the American Future, for the purpose of increasing public awareness of the commission's recommendations and stimulating informed discussion of the issue.

The commission has shown imagination and leadership in helping to increase public awareness of the population growth hazards facing this nation, and was the first national advisory panel to produce an official film version of its report, aired last November on the Public Broadcasting System. Commercial television stations have likewise shown their concern by presenting special programming on population issues. Most recently, on January 6, ABC News aired an hour-long special, "Population: Boom or Doom," which was keyed to the commission's report. The program covered the far-reaching and sometimes controversial aspects of the report, among other episodes, visiting an abortion clinic in New York and showing rural high school students in Yanceyville, N.C. participating in a Family Life course that discussed the responsibilities of bringing children into an increasingly overpopulated world. The news inquiry was written by Marlene Sanders and featured ABC correspondents Herbert Kaplow and Virginia Sherwood.

Last November CBS-TV presented a sensitive, two-part series on abortion through its weekly program, *Maude*, and NBC-TV last June devoted a month to exploring the population issues on its five wholly owned and operated stations. These are courageous and important first steps toward the recognition and, I believe, the ultimate solution of our population growth problem.

Recently, several magazine and newspaper articles have announced the latest National Bureau of Census statistics which revealed that the present birth rate in the United States has declined to below "replacement level" (i.e., two children per couple). However, this does not mean that the population has stopped growing. I feel it is important to realize, as the commission found, that this low rate must be maintained for sixty to seventy years before the population stabilizes. Further, commission research shows that a population increase of at least 50 to 80 million people is inevitable before the year 2000, and that enlightened legislation should be enacted to allow a smooth, controlled assimilation of this new population into our society.

While the commission's report emphasizes that there is no immediate population "crisis" in this country, it did state that population growth often aggravates other problems and makes them more difficult to solve. The commission found that we cannot ignore, as we have in the past, the importance of how many people there are and where they live. Slower growth creates opportunities to deal with economic, social and environmental problems. We must, for example, have better mechanisms to insure sound use of land, one of our most precious resources. Without better planning at all levels of government, careless development will abound. It is clear that public works programs, particularly on the massive federal level, influence where development occurs and, subsequently, where people live and work (e.g., Cape Kennedy and the Interstate Highway System). Just as public policies are now evaluated for their effect on the economy or the environment, I believe we must also evaluate the "population" effect of federal and state policies.

The commission's report stresses that informed individual choice is our best route to a stabilized population and an improved quality of life. Such "freedom of choice" necessitates several important changes in our society. To give each individual control of his own reproductive processes, and to help eliminate unwanted childbearing, the commission recommends:

¶Population and sex education for all ages.

¶Federal support for the provision of contraceptive supplies and information to all those who want, but cannot afford, such services.

¶Passage of laws allowing minors to receive family planning counseling and services.

¶Liberalization of state abortion statutes along the lines of the New York State law.

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¶Elimination of laws and administrative practices which make access to voluntary sterilization difficult or impossible.

The importance of "informed individual choice" in helping to stabilize our population is reflected in the results of the commission's national sample of women in the reproductive age range. It revealed that 44 per cent of all births to married women in the period between 1965 and 1970 were reported as "unplanned," while 15 per cent were described as "unwanted." After further research, the commission concluded that it would be decidedly in the interest of the "unwanted" child and its mother, as well as that of society at large, if we could eliminate unwanted births through methods recommended above. If we could accomplish this one goal, we would be close to the reproductive level necessary to eventually stabilize our population.

Some have charged that population limitation policies are "anti-child," but I believe that the commission's document is distinctly "pro-child." Several of the commission's recommendations were specifically designed to improve the environment in which children are raised. Many contend that population policies disregard the importance of human life; I feel it was the commission's purpose, in every instance, to achieve the highest regard for life by making it possible for every person to realize his or her full potential.

The commission's report is not a perfect prescription for the nation's ills, nor is it a manifesto for the "greening" of our society. It is, I believe, a reasonable statement of important first steps which can and must be taken toward the fundamental goal of population policies —the richest quality of life for all. HUGH DOWNS

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COALITION FOR A DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

THE OPERATORS MAKE THEIR PLAY

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ
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American politics is a furious business. In an age of advertisement, promotion and instant manifestoes, the politics of public appeal becomes especially ferocious. Thanks to full-page announcements in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* on Thursday, December 7 (just two days before the meeting of the Democratic National Committee to elect a new chairman) we are presented with the latest adventures of at least one portion of the intelligentsia that is seeking a central role in Democratic Party affairs. The Coalition for a Democratic Majority, thus announced, appears to be a curious group: it embraces right-wing Socialists, mainline Harvard sociologists, vigorously pluralistic political scientists at Berkeley, confirmed petition signers from miscellaneous backgrounds like James Roosevelt, Daniel Bell and Paul Seabury (who only two months ago were urging the public to re-elect President Nixon, courtesy of Maurice Stans and the Republican National Committee). And, of course, some very able and dedicated people who sincerely believe that the call from the Coalition for a Democratic Majority (CDM) should be heeded, and is therefore needed, at this time.

Ben J. Wattenberg, co-author of *The Real Majority* and former aide to Sen. Henry M. Jackson, and his organizing committee have struck a deep and responsive chord with their coalition, at least in the editorial heartland of *The Wall Street Journal*. That is made plain by the paper's lead statement on the coalition's public appeal, accompanied by a parallel analysis of the schisms and splits within the Socialist Party of the United States (which reached a critical point in October when Michael Harrington resigned as the party's co-chairman). Said the *Journal* (December 8):

> The CDM intends to present an organized intellectual opposition to the New Politics influence within the Democratic Party. There have been individual attempts at this in the past, of course, but they were isolated, ignored, and generally unfashionable. . . . When it comes down to practical politics, we suspect the CDM, although it is recruiting members from the ranks of like-minded businessmen and professionals, will result in a closer alliance between intellectuals and labor than has been seen in recent decades. . . . On the whole, that might not be a bad thing, even though we shudder at the thought of the economic proposals that might come forward. The CDM speaks for a tradition with sound political instincts and long experience in running the country. It will do its best to keep the opposition party from the hands of a remarkably irresponsible movement, and that is a healthy development.

Quite aside from this laying on of hands by corporate headquarters, the CDM statement is important. It represents the collective thinking of some of the nation's most able minds, people with powerful political instincts for victory and not mere survival. The first public effort since McGovern's defeat to formulate a Democratic political program, it is in my judgment an attempt to shape the party structure and political choice for a Democratic candidate in 1976. The reason for this early move is more than anger at having been frozen out of the electoral scene in 1972, and certainly more than personal pique. It is a shared feeling that 1976 is definitely a Democratic year; that with President Nixon out of the way, and a fratricidal struggle developing between Senator Percy and Vice President Agnew, the Party of the

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People will be returned to office, barring its own continued organizational and ideological schizophrenia. And this assessment is probably sound. Thus, the statement by the CDM should be read as a first call to rally the Democrats to a Presidential banner and, more important, to form the front line of an intellectual vanguard that would influence, if not direct, the party in its nominating choices.

The issuance of the CDM manifesto coincides with an inner struggle over control of Democratic Party machinery. The displacement of the McGovern-supported Jean Westwood (who barely managed to avoid impeachment) by the Connally-supported Robert Strauss suggests the extent to which the old-line officials have moved back into control. The inability of a compromise candidate like George Mitchell to gain the chairmanship indicates the deep trouble of the Left-Democratic faction. In this sense, the Wattenberg manifesto is the ideological counterpoint to the displacement of the Left-Democratic faction. What began almost immediately after the election as a process of isolating the "McGovernites" from the "mainstream" is crystallized in the CDM manifesto as a repudiation of "The Democratic New Politics" candidate.

To be sure, the role of Democratic national chairman is a notch or two below omnipotence. As Eugene McCarthy recently quipped to Thomas J. Foley of the *Los Angeles Times*: "Being national chairman is like an Irish inheritance. The smaller it is, the more they fight over it." And David S. Broder, writing in *The Washington Post*, notes that the victory of Strauss over Mrs. Westwood was not quite a rout of liberals and reformers. For while the faces and names of the players may change, the party reforms at the organizational level remain intact. Strauss himself indicated that he "got the message" and offered some proof of it by noting that nine appointments are due to the blacks in the newly organized Democratic National Committee. This, in addition to the twenty-five blacks now on the committee, is a substantial move to continue the tendencies set in motion by the McGovern guidelines. It might just be that too much has happened to the party structure for the Wattenberg counter-reformation to catch hold. But that, of course, is exactly what remains to be determined in the next four years. For until 1976, the only sort of politics open to the Democratic National Committee is exactly the politics of pressurized symbols.

The "six driving ideas" provided by the CDM—what are termed the "Democratic concepts of progress"—certainly give the liberals little ground for disagreement.

> ¶An ever expanding opportunity for individuals without regard to race, class, sex, or ethnic origin;
> ¶An ever fairer distribution of the fruits of the country's vast wealth and productivity;
> ¶A sustained effort, through compensatory action, to give those who have by birth and background been disadvantaged a full opportunity to compete as equals in American life;
> ¶A sober but spirited assumption of America's share of responsibility for the establishment of a more secure international community;
> ¶A knowledge that without democratic order there can be no justice and without justice there can be no democratic order;
> ¶A belief that democracy works and that it works because American voters are wisely and prudently aware of their own self interest.

However, lack of basis for debate is the essential problem. Those six ideas belong to the American ideology as a whole; to the enlightened wing of the Republican Party and to the dominant wing of the minuscule Socialist Party, no less than to the traditional Democratic Party leaders. So the essential quality of the prologemena is a return to the celebrationist style, to feeling good about America—to keeping the Republicans from capturing, next time around, the optimistic mood of most voters. The unwritten assumption is that these voters perceive themselves as privileged and prestigious, rather than colonialists and conquerers. The war in Vietnam has been relegated to ancient history even before it has been wound down.

CDM's statement of principles is belied by its articles of faith in the New Restorationism, and in why the New Politics has failed. It is here that the substance of this "common sense liberalism" becomes transparent.

> In the turbulence and confusion of the past few years, the national Democratic Party has come to be unduly influenced by forces and ideas unrepresentative of traditional Democratic principles.
>
> The belief that the security of the United States depends upon a stable and progressive world community has been challenged by the idea that the United States must withdraw from its international responsibilities and effect a serious diminution of its own power.
>
> The belief that America is a great nation seeking to correct major inequities has been challenged by the idea that American society is sick and guilty, morally bankrupt and inherently corrupt.
>
> The idea that social progress is best served by a balancing of the conflicting rights, needs, and demands of many different kinds of people has been challenged by the claim of one small group that it knows what is best for others.
>
> The principle of individual merit without regard to inherited status has been challenged by the idea of proportionalism in accordance with birth and group origin.
>
> The belief that order is essential to justice has been diluted by a cavalier attitude toward the tens of millions of Americans who are genuinely and correctly concerned about public safety and respect for law.

Two themes emerge most crisply: the motif of international commitment and the leitmotif of national equity. Cutting away the hyperbole that is part of any such proclamation, the allegation that the New Politics means a new isolationism is challenged by the CDM group in the name of international responsibility. But since CDM apparently has nothing to add to the current GOP position on international affairs, the distinct impression left by the document is that foreign policy itself should somehow be removed from partisan politics. But there is more to it than that: the galaxy of Democratic Party national leaders, including Truman, Stevenson, Kennedy, Johnson and Humphrey, were all cut from the same liberal interventionist mold. They were as much architects of the cold war and the Southeast Asian hot wars as their Republican adversaries; indeed, a comparison of the Eisen-

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hower and Kennedy administrations, and more recently, the Johnson and Nixon Administrations, makes it plain that the Democratic leadership must bear the brunt of responsibility for foreign policy failures in postwar America.

If the CDM posture means anything, it advocates a move to the Right of the Republican attempts at rapprochement. The Democratic CDM forces are precisely the ones that can be expected to raise the cry of *traison* as the nation moves to a more sober, hence narrower, scope of interests. The Metternichean peace of Nixon and Kissinger is, after all, based on a spheres of influence doctrine that is isomorphic with the Brezhnev-Kosygin doctrine, and it has the force of multinationalism in economics to support it. The Democratic conservative faction can thus be expected to swing to the Right of the Republican establishment in an effort to capture the high ground of low-down politics. That this posture might have electoral success, despite its implausibility as a realistic foreign policy, can hardly be contested. Indeed, as the United States confines its exercise of power to its "sphere," while the cold war extracts a certain price in economics and politics with respect to the Third World as well as Europe, CDM's attack on "neo-isolationism" will shift from the New Politics group on the Left to the old Republican groups on the Right.

The domestic policy of the CDM is likewise centered on the "contest system" now largely in effect, versus the "quota system" presumably advocated by the New Politics. Here too, one can expect the attack to shift to the Republican Administration, which, after all, has made the most considerable efforts in support of affirmative action. The present organization of the government has pushed department agencies like HEW and HUD far beyond the operational and policy limits of the Johnson era; and even under its new director, Caspar Weinberger, the cutbacks at HEW will be hard to sustain at the expense of the militants.

Of course, the assumption that the "principle of individual merit" is undermined by the "idea of proportionalism" assumes that the basic good of the country is at present distributed according to merit. Beyond that, it assumes that all individuals are now more or less equal. Equity becomes the starting point, rather than the goal. The imagery that divided Republicans from Democrats in the past was that Republicans assumed that every one should have the right to start from the same place and end up differently; whereas the Democrats assumed that, because starting points are difficult to control, the emphasis should be on managing outcomes. That is essentially the principle of graduated taxation whereby (supposedly) the rich pay disproportionately more than the poor. To pretend that everyone starts and finishes in rough proportion to merit alone is to ignore the facts of the American experience; and particularly the fact that racial embitterment derives from inequity in the distribution of wealth and power.

It is also interesting that women are so poorly represented among the signers of the CDM manifesto: for the most part, those listed are wives—Valerie Earle, Pearl K. Bell. Midge Decter is, of course, a famous writer in her own right, as well as being the wife of Norman Podhoretz; but she also has the distinction at this point of being very much the leading anti-feminist spokeswoman. So here, too, one detects a distribution of people whose commitment is to good old-fashioned laissez-faire tactics; and a denial of the special claims of large groups to equity. The CDM proposes fiscal compensation, but assumes an infinite fiscal elasticity in which everyone wins and no one pays. In other words, the same old-fashioned bankrupt welfarism.

Here too one again gets the strong impression that, as the New Politics fade from memory, the Coalition for a Democratic Majority will begin to swing its attack toward the Republican Party, not so much as being the Party of Power and Prestige, but as the party which, within the framework of present world and national realities, has sought, with limited success, to redirect priorities to achieve a broad consensus. This raises the interesting prospect that the Democratic Party, in its rush to the Right, will create the potential for yet another Republican victory. The next "four more years" will probably be fought out not on the foreign policy of the Administration but on its domestic policy. It might well appear to many minority groups that Republicanism expresses the capitalist work ethic more faithfully than does the CDM assumption of guaranteed economic opportunity, and without the hypocrisy of social justice wrapped around a club of "public safety and respect for law."

The CDM shares a prevailing misperception of the recent elections. The New Politics certainly did not emerge victorious, yet in the state and Congressional elections, New Politics candidates did as well as more conservative Democratic candidates. Presidential candidates usually do not run on domestic issues as much as on foreign policy. Vietnam has become too hot a potato for Congressional and statewide candidates to handle, so they tend to play down their support or opposition, in favor of "bread-and-butter" and down-home issues. It is not the New Politics but opposition politics itself that has come upon hard times.

According to the CDM, a candidate running for the Presidency on a peace ticket can hardly hope to top the performances of Mr. Nixon in foreign policy. Indeed, holding every other factor constant, the military victory of the President at Haiphong Harbor, and the diplomatic détentes achieved in the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China (in which the Haiphong mining no doubt played a role) made the task of Mr. McGovern well-nigh impossible. He created a credibility gap by painting President Nixon in traditional warrior colors, when this no longer seemed to be the case. Of course, the new bombing threatens Nixon's peace posture, and once again provides an opening to the Left for the Democratic Party; an opening that the CDM approach is calculated to thwart.

That is not to say that Mr. Nixon's posture represents a left-wing point of view. A Democratic Party approach might be based on the need for fewer big-power bilateral settlements and a stronger urging toward collective security and collective action. It might also develop frameworks of regional cooperation based on economic need

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rather than ideological or political commitment to the American way. But these surely are not the impulses behind the CDM.

What then are these impulses? Here, it seems that the Coalition for a Democratic Majority is to the Americans for Democratic Action what that organization was with respect to the Henry Wallace movement in 1948: an instrument for bridling left-wing sentiments within the Democratic Party and, if necessary, purging the party of its radical elements. This, of course, is a speculative interpretation, but it does seem clear that the attack on the New Politics, when translated into organizational terms, is a critique of the Americans for Democratic Action. And here too, we can harken back to Robert Strauss and his plainly stated beliefs that it would be a good idea, as Molly Ivins put it in the *Texas Observer,* to get rid of John Kenneth Galbraith—and what Strauss called the "kamikaze" Democrats. The CDM is basically an appeal to the Democratic regulars to provide an option to the Americans for Democratic Action at the intellectual and policy making level—an option it has not really felt the need to exercise in the past, but which becomes imperative if the Democratic Party is to move to the right of Center.

Even so, the actual votes from 1968 to 1972 represented a smaller shift than might be imagined. Candidate Humphrey got slightly less than 44 per cent in 1968; candidate McGovern got slightly less than 40 per cent. The key factor was the Wallace vote, which mostly went down the line for President Nixon. A race between the Democratic (McGovern) Left, the Republican (Nixon) Center and the American Independent (Wallace) Right would have been far closer and a truer rendering of the American electorate. As it was, the two-party race falsified the actual alignment of power and persuasion in this country. And while I believe that Nixon would still have managed a victory, the mandate from that victory would have been far less persuasive or decisive. For the signatories of the CDM to fail to take stock of the actual situation will only further polarize the factions within the Democratic Party, and within the electorate as a whole.

Underlying all else in this CDM manifesto is a metaphysical assumption of health in American society. Obviously, this is a matter debated constantly and continuously: it cannot possibly be resolved in one appeal. The reason that this debate contains such perennial enjoyment for those engaged in it is the twin-track nature of American life: its perceived success in the fields of business, commerce and industrial output; and its subjective failures in such areas as work satisfaction, personal enjoyment and individual liberation—in general, what might be called the psychological arena. The New Politics was not incorrect in its assessments; rather it tended to overestimate the extent to which these subjective failures in American society were restricted to middle-class elements rather than to the population as a whole. But to think that the objective indicators of success still dominate healthy proletarian sentiment is to ignore the extent to which the "have" classes in American life show the facts of the future to the "have not" classes. In short, it is patently nonsensical to manufacture an appeal based on the health of the American psyche, when in fact that psyche has been badly cloven along class lines, and when now the subjective anguish felt by many of the professional and intellectual sectors is beginning to permeate American life as a whole. Certainly by the next election, the subjective factors of discontent pointed out by the New Politics will be more widespread and more nearly typical of the population as a whole.

The CDM manifesto reveals a failure of nerve, a failure to deal frankly with the McGovern-Shriver ticket; by so doing, it links the campaign to the New Politics. In fact, as the campaign went along, the top of the ticket broadened out to approximately the lines indicated in the manifesto. It might be argued that McGovern and his aides failed to appreciate the extent to which the Eagleton affair was indeed a political question, the question of the rights of those who have been treated for mental illness to be at some point considered cured. It might be argued that McGovern failed to offer a real alternative to the President's categorical assault on the use of drugs, which would have demanded little more than that the candidate employ the President's own Task Force on Drugs. McGovern's failure to perceive the moral maturity of Americans on questions ranging from personal sex practices to pornography probably discouraged his enthusiasts and certainly failed to gain him new recruits. In other words, it could well be argued that the McGovern campaign failed in part because it prematurely abandoned the New Politics, rather than because it was so slavishly devoted to it, as intimated in the Wattenberg-CDM manifesto.

Because of the conservative cast of the CDM document, and many of its signatories, this call for a new coalition is unstable. How many of these people, or those who think like them, would be able to resist the blandishments of the Nixon Administration? Isn't it probable that Democratic Party traditionalists such as Irving Kristol will abstain from such appeals as soon as they are tapped for marginal appointments within Nixon's second-term bureaucracy? In short, this particular group of intellectuals, like parallel Democratic Party groups in the business, commercial and labor ranks, will begin to find realignment a permanent rather than temporary phenomenon.

And this raises the ultimate question: whether the issuance of this manifesto is not premature by three years at least. National political movements line up behind national candidates. If the recent election has left the New Politics group essentially leaderless, it has not placed the New Restorationists in any better position. The political leaders of the party are conspicuously missing from this manifesto—Kennedy, Mondale, Ribicoff, even Askew, all are absent. And these are, after all, the human leaders who represent the groups that must forge a new coalition. This attempt by the CDM is less an appeal for funds than an appeal to party regulars—but the regular party leaders are precisely the ones who are now withholding their political support from any special segment of the party. Obviously, the more conservative wings representing Senator Jackson and George Meany will be gratified by this ideological thrust. But ultimately this is a Manifesto in search of a Movement. □

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Merger, Monopoly & A Free Press

STEPHEN R. BARNETT
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The old journalistic saw that "newsmen don't make news" sounds quaint these days. With reporters jailed for refusing to identify their confidential sources, with the government accusing newsmen of "ideological plugola" and being accused in turn of seeking to control both public and private television, with the press and broadcasting caught up in public controversy at almost every turn, the news media are installed as one of the major beats in the land.

But not all issues involving the media have attracted the coverage they deserve. One hears much about reporters' subpoenas and the threat they pose to the public's right to know, but considerably less about other controversies involving the media, the government and the First Amendment. The whole subject of media concentration somehow eludes the nation's newspapers and TV stations. Two years ago, for example, when Congress made its own contribution to newspaper monopoly by passing the Newspaper Preservation Act, the publishers' lobbying campaign was backed up by studied blandness in the nation's press (see "The 'Failing' Newspaper Probe: The Press Dummies Up," by Arthur E. Rowse, *The Nation*, June 30, 1969). Last summer, when the industry took another major step toward monopoly by killing major newspapers in Boston, Washington and Newark, the help provided by the Justice Department was overlooked in the media. At present, the leading nonstory is the proposal of the Federal Communications Commission to break up common ownerships of newspapers and broadcast stations in cities throughout the country—an uncommonly important and controversial issue that may be unrivaled for the thoroughness with which the media have blacked it out.

Newspaper-Killing Mergers and the Justice Department

Death came last summer to the Boston *Herald-Traveler*, the Washington *Daily News* and the *Newark News*. With a slight variation of technique in Newark, each paper was sold to a competing publisher and closed down. Boston and Washington are thus reduced to two newspapers each, making New York the only U.S. city with three separately owned, general circulation dailies. Newark now has one-publisher monopoly, as do 96 per cent of the daily-newspaper cities in the country. (Another twenty-two cities have two-publisher monopolies—"joint-operating agreements," exempted from the antitrust laws by the Newspaper Preservation Act, whereby two publishers agree to fix prices, split profits and otherwise pool their economic interests, while supposedly still competing in the news and editorial spheres. Real newspaper competition survives in only some thirty-five cities, less than 3 per cent of the total.)

Press coverage of the three recent newspaper deaths followed the established pattern for such occasions—long stories quoting the tear-stained statements of the publishers involved, nostalgic obituaries, farewell editorials citing the lesson for labor unions. Fingers were pointed at television competition, at the growth of the suburbs, at increased labor costs. Missing, as usual, were inquiries into the actual causes and circumstances of death. No one suggested that the three cases were classic illustrations of what some consider a primary cause of newspaper monopoly in this country—simple violations of the antitrust laws, acquiesced in by the Justice Department out of deference for the political power of newspaper publishers.

The media offered a special explanation for the death of the *Herald-Traveler* in Boston. They blamed it on the FCC, which in the celebrated *WHDH* case had lifted the *Herald-Traveler*'s TV license in the interest of reducing concentration of control. The indictment of the FCC was spelled out on the editorial page of *The Wall Street Journal* on July 17 by Louis M. Kohlmeier, a member of the paper's Washington bureau and author of a book on the regulatory agencies:

> The case of the *Herald-Traveler* began with the FCC attempting to provide Bostonians with a greater diversity of broadcast and printed information and opinion. "It is important in a free society," the commission nobly declared, "to prevent concentration of control of the sources of news and opinion." It ended, 14 years later, with Bostonians left with the same number of broadcast stations and one less newspaper. . . .

The same line had been aired by the CBS radio network in a March 19th broadcast of *CBS Views the Press* (a program supposedly designed to criticize the media, but commonly used to voice the corporate position of CBS on issues of government regulation). Noting the turnover of Boston's Channel 5 to its new proprietors and the publicity that the *Herald-Traveler* would fold, CBS concluded that the case "has brought to light an ironic contradiction in federal communications policy." It explained:

> In the *WHDH* ruling, the FCC was implementing a policy designed to reduce media monopoly and ensure that the American people are provided with diverse and competitive sources of news, information and entertainment. If the *Herald-Traveler* does fold, however, the action against WHDH will have an effect precisely opposite that goal.

That the FCC had dealt a blow to the people of Boston was not as evident as the media made out. If the owners of the *Herald-Traveler* had not lost their TV license, they might indeed have kept the newspaper alive. But they might have folded it anyhow—as the Scripps-Howard chain folded its Washington *Daily News* a month later, while continuing to hold five TV licenses. Moreover, even if the *Herald-Traveler* had survived, it does not follow that Boston would not have lost a newspaper. If the *Herald-Traveler* had not folded, the paper that bought it out, Hearst's *Record-American*, probably would have. As Boston newsman Jack Thomas, writing in the *Columbia*

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Journalism Review, has described the scene: "The *Herald* and the *Record-American* were like two tired prizefighters, battering each other in the middle of the ring, hoping to God the other would collapse first." The death of the *Herald-Traveler* was followed a month later by the similar killing of the *Daily News* in Washington, and then by the expiration of the *Newark News*. Neither of these losses could be blamed on the FCC. And there was not much effort by *The Wall Street Journal*, CBS, or the rest of the media to place the blame elsewhere.

It might have been placed on the Department of Justice. In fact, it is not clear that any of the three cities had to lose a newspaper. In each case the paper was sold to a competitor, and the public had no way of knowing whether it could have been sold instead to someone who would keep it alive. That was not the concern of the selling publishers, who doubtless could get a better price from the competitor, but it should have been the concern of the Justice Department, which is supposed to enforce the antitrust laws. Under those laws, the Supreme Court has ruled, even a "failing" newspaper may not be sold to a competitor "unless it is established" that he "is the only available purchaser." The Department has expressly adopted this standard in its own "merger guidelines," which insist on "good faith efforts by the failing firm . . . to elicit a reasonable offer of acquisition" from a noncompetitor. The Department's role—or lack of one—in each of the three newspaper-killing mergers deserved more attention than it got.

In Boston, the *Herald-Traveler* was sold on June 18, for $8.5 million, to the rival Hearst Corporation, which of course immediately closed it down. The Justice Department had been asked to "clear" the transaction, and did so, announcing in a three-paragraph press release, issued June 15, that it had informed the *Herald-Traveler* and Hearst it would not sue to block their plan, which "has been under study by the Antitrust Division since early in May." The release stated that the *Herald-Traveler* had recently lost its TV license and that the newspaper "has suffered substantial operating losses in recent years." It avoided the crucial question of whether a different purchaser might have been found, and simply recited *Herald-Traveler*'s claim that "if the sale of the *Herald-Traveler* to the *Record-American* did not go through the assets of the newspaper would be liquidated." Justice said nothing about the credibility of this threat, about whether the requirement of "good faith efforts" to find another purchaser had been met, or about anything else its study had found. As is customary, there had been no public disclosure that the Department was considering the matter, much less any sort of hearing for the Boston public.

In Washington a month later, when Scripps-Howard's *Daily News* was sold to the *Evening Star* for the reported price of $5 million, Justice was even more passive and the public even less informed. The death of the *Daily News* came with suspicious suddenness—the announcement was made on the morning of July 12, the last edition was printed that same afternoon—and the involvement of the Justice Department has been the subject of conflicting reports. At the July 12th press conference, according to *The Wall Street Journal*, the president of the *Star*, John H. Kauffmann, "declined to say whether antitrust clearance had been obtained from the Justice Department." Both *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* quoted an unidentified Justice spokesman as saying that no clearance had been requested or obtained.

Nonetheless, Joseph C. Goulden, writing in the October issue of *The Washingtonian*, quotes Kauffmann as telling him: "The Justice Department was an obstacle in terms of the amount of information we had to give to the Antitrust Division. They went over the deal with a fine comb, and said, 'O.K., go ahead.'" In a recent telephone interview with me, Kauffmann denied this quote, and at the Antitrust Division, Gerald A. Connell, chief of the General Litigation Section, confirms that clearance for the deal was never sought or given.

Asked why Justice was not asked to clear the deal, or at least informed of it, Kauffmann points out that there is no legal obligation to give the Department notice. "It is a right the papers have, not an obligation." He claims the Department did investigate the legality of the deal after it happened, "and properly so." Asked what the Department or the courts could have done at that point if the deal had proved illegal, Kauffmann concedes that resurrection of the *Daily News* would have been impossible, but suggests that "they could have gotten an injunction to prevent us from using the *Daily News* masthead or subscription lists." He says the secrecy and suddenness were motivated mainly by upcoming labor negotiations, and denies they reflected any fear that the Justice Department might stop the merger—"I knew I could convince them of the rightness of the decision." Kauffmann admits, however, that procedure did reflect fear lest the Department seek to postpone consummation of the deal until its legality could be investigated.

Kauffmann is right that publishers have no legal obligation to let the government know ahead of time when they plan to kill a paper through merger. In the case of bank mergers, the law requires thirty days' advance notice to the Justice Department, and the Federal Trade Commission requires advance notice of essentially any merger whose asset value exceeds $250 million. Few if any newspaper mergers will meet the latter test, even though their importance to the public—especially when they involve loss of a paper—is apt to be much greater than that of most mergers worth $250 million, and of most bank mergers as well.

Under present law, the Antitrust Division is expected to maintain its own guard against the consummation of possibly illegal mergers. Indeed, the head of the division has recently noted the problem of "midnight mergers," and has voted to stop them by having "available, in advance, sufficient information concerning the market structures in our economy and sufficient data concerning firms within the market. . . ." Such information was scarcely needed in the case of the *Daily News* and the *Star*. Their deal was plainly illegal, unless justified by evidence that another purchaser could not be found, and the burden of showing that was on the publishers. Moreover, rumors of the merger were rife in Washington—some in published form—for a good while before July 12. A minimally alert Antitrust Division would have asked the *Star* and Scripps-Howard what was going on, or taken

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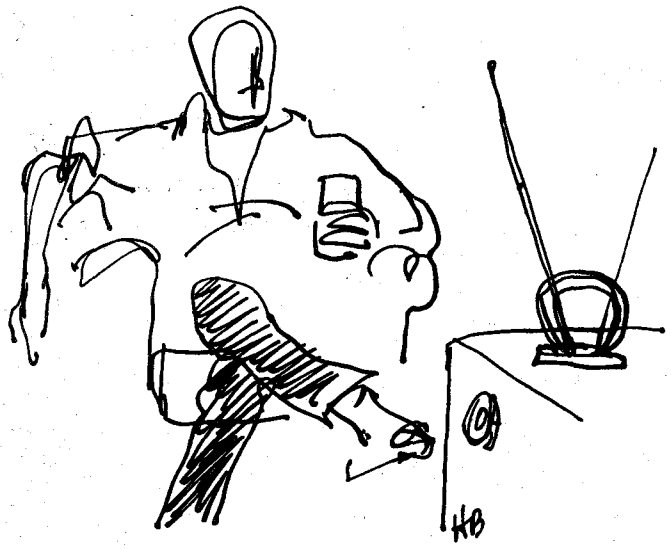

other precautions to avoid being caught flatfooted. Failing that, the Department, if it had tried, might have succeeded in getting a court to stay consummation of the merger even within the few hours available after the announcement on July 12. At best, the Antitrust Division was asleep at the switch, but it may have been called off the case by higher authority. The Administration's fondness for the *Evening Star*, rival of the hated *Post*, is no secret, as illustrated by the exclusive interview Mr. Nixon gave the paper on the eve of the election.

In Newark, the sellout of the *News* to the competing *Star-Ledger*, owned by the Newhouse chain, was accomplished in a more subtle, two-step maneuver. In September 1971, while the *News* was closed by a strike, Media General, Inc., a freewheeling conglomerate that had bought the paper only the year before, sold the *News*'s Sunday edition and most of its physical assets to Newhouse for $20 million. As pointed out recently by *Business Week*, in this "sweet deal" Media General got "more cash than the *News* seemed to be worth," and kept not only the paper's daily edition but $8 million worth of presses and a paper-recycling company whose annual cash flow exceeds $30 million. Richard Reeves, writing in the *Columbia Journalism Review*, estimates that the 1971 deal left Media General "at worst, coming out very close to even" on its $50 million investment in Newark.

With the *News* gutted, the *Star-Ledger* strengthened and Media General bailed out, the latter's determination to keep the *News* alive after the strike was widely questioned. Reeves finds indications "that Media General was willing to make at least a halfhearted effort to keep the paper alive"; *Business Week* says "Newspapermen and analysts who have studied the Newark situation doubt Media General really intended to make a go of the paper." Sure enough, the *News* lasted only four months after resuming publication. The beauty of the arrangement was that when the end came, it was simply a matter of ceasing publication and leaving Newhouse with a monopoly. There was nothing left of the *News* for Media General to sell, and thus there was no transaction for even a vigilant Justice Department to study.

The 1971 deal that condemned the *News* did have the blessing of the Department, which apparently could not see what was plain to other observers. In October 1971 Justice issued a press release saying it had informed the Newark publishers that it would not sue to block their agreement. The release noted the strike and said that the paper "has experienced operating losses in 1970 and the first five months of 1971." (No reference was made to the Department's merger guidelines, which state that the Department "does not regard a firm as failing merely because the firm has been unprofitable for a period of time. . . .") The release also noted, optimistically: "The agreement contemplates that the two papers will continue to operate their weekday editions on a competitive basis."

In thus clearing the agreement, the Department followed its normal practice of giving no public notice that the matter was being considered, no opportunity for a hearing, and no reasons for its decision other than the cryptic notations in the press release. In the Newark case, however, a correspondence ensued between the Department and the Institute for Public Interest Representation at the Georgetown University Law Center. Victor H. Kramer, the institute's director, wrote Attorney General Mitchell asking to know the "criteria or standards of law or policy" on which the Department had based its decision, and asking to see, under the Freedom of Information Act, the relevant internal memoranda.

Richard Kleindienst, then Deputy Attorney General, replied magisterially that the Department had decided "prosecution would not be appropriate," and that "the reasons for this determination are suggested in the press release." More informatively, he went on to reveal that "a preliminary form of the Newark agreement and certain background data were informally submitted by counsel for the Newark papers to the Antitrust Division in the summer of 1971," and that "Naturally, there are certain staff memoranda analyzing and commenting upon the various considerations involved. . . ." He further disclosed that "Meetings were held with counsel for the Newark papers, these matters were discussed, and the tentative views of the division were orally communicated to them. Thereafter, major changes were made by the parties in the form of the Newark agreement." Kleindienst refused, however, to produce any of the Department's papers on the case, claiming them to be exempt from the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The death by purchase of newspapers in Boston, Washington and Newark, and the role of the Justice Department in letting it happen, raise a number of questions. It does not appear that the Department in any of these cases enforced the legal requirement that the publishers show the impossibility of finding a different purchaser. Perhaps the Department considered the requirement inapplicable to the Newark deal, on the theory that the *News* would survive to provide the *Star-Ledger* with competition on weekdays. If so, the Department was naive.

One cannot know for sure, however, what standards the Department did apply, or failed to apply, as it acquiesced in these mergers. In fact, one can know scarcely anything about what happens in these cases. The secrecy

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of the Department's procedures gives the public no word that anything is going on, much less an opportunity to be heard, when a deal to kill a newspaper is presented to the Antitrust Division, is secretly negotiated, and is declared immune from government challenge.

We have here an instance of the secret proceedings and the "secret law" that characterize so many dealings between federal agencies and interested parties. The phenomenon has proved all but impervious to the Freedom of Information Act, as is shown by Kleindienst's position on the Newark case. During the election campaign Senator McGovern proposed a seven-point "Federal Code of Ethics" to deal with governmental secrecy, but even his program was wide of this mark. He proposed the obligatory disclosure of private overtures to the White House and of contacts between regulatory agencies and the executive branch, but said nothing about dealings between interested parties and the Justice Department, the Internal Revenue Service, or other regulatory agencies.

At least in the case of local-newspaper mergers (and joint-operating agreements as well), the problem should not be difficult to solve. These events are important to the public, they are irreparable and they are relatively rare (indeed, there are not many competing newspapers left to merge). They ought to be subject to advance notice to the Justice Department, to public notice and a public hearing before the Department reaches a decision, and to a public statement by the Department of the reasons for its decision.

Another question springs from the fact that the publishers involved in the three newspaper sellouts—Scripps-Howard and the *Evening Star* in Washington, the *Herald-Traveler* and Hearst in Boston, and at least Newhouse in Newark—are all friends and supporters of the Nixon Administration. The secret, mute, pliant role of the Justice Department in letting the mergers go through is thus more than a little reminiscent of the ITT affair. President Kauffmann of the *Star* denies "categorically" that the White House was apprised in advance of the *Star-News* deal, but such contact may well have been unnecessary, given the record of this Administration.

Finally, there is the question why the press and the broadcast media showed no curiosity about the Justice Department's handling of these matters. These are the same media that covered rather thoroughly the ITT affair (at least after Jack Anderson brought it to light), and that flayed the FCC at length for *its* role in the death of the *Herald-Traveler*. It may be, of course, that the subject was unnoticed or was not considered newsworthy, but other explanations suggest themselves. Jack Anderson, for example, might have been expected to pick up the rather fragrant aroma of the midday merger in Washington, but his column is distributed nationally by United Feature Syndicate, owned by Scripps-Howard. Senator McGovern, in his "Federal Code of Ethics" campaign speech, might well have cited the newspaper deals among his examples of the Nixon Administration's "abuse of government power on behalf of special interests." If he had, it would have been interesting to see what coverage he received in the numerous newspapers owned by the publishers involved. If he had cited the Washington deal, it would have been especially interesting to check the coverage by the UPI wire service, owned by Scripps-Howard. The answer thus may be that some "special interests" are more special than others. There are some that benefit not only from abuse of governmental power but also from abuse of the media power they command.

Media Monopoly, the FCC and the Public Interest

The public's stake in media diversity figured prominently in media commentary on the death of the *Herald-Traveler*. Commentators attacked the FCC for its *WHDH* decision, which allegedly killed the paper, and claimed the commission was in fact undermining the policy it purported to promote. What is curious in this is that critics of the *WHDH* decision fastened on that case, and that case alone, as an occasion to invoke the value of fending off monopoly from the mass media. Yet in fact the *WHDH* decision was a unique and aberrational action by the FCC. While the media assailed the commission for failing in that case to promote media diversity in Boston, they have ignored the FCC's far more typical approach to the problem of media monopoly, which is to feign concern and do nothing. Even more obstinately than the FCC itself, the media ignore the whole subject of media concentration.

Concentration of ownership is a dominant fact of press and broadcasting operations in this country. Newspaper chains now control more than half the nation's daily newspapers (and more than 60 per cent of the circulation) and are fast acquiring the rest. At the local level, daily-newspaper monopoly prevails almost everywhere. And there are some ninety-three instances in some eighty-five cities where the owner of a daily newspaper also owns a local TV station.

The existing antitrust laws, even assuming the Justice Department enforced them against the media, would have a limited effect on concentration. They do not apply to the chains, since their newspapers are in different cities, and they do not reach newspaper monopolies unless the monopoly is created or maintained by improper means. Their impact on newspaper-TV combinations at the local level has never been tested. Almost every attempt in recent years to create a *new* combination of this kind has been met with threats to sue by the Justice Department, whereupon the companies involved have backed down

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rather than go to court and establish a precedent. (This happened most recently in Portland, Ore. where Newhouse, owner of the two dailies and a half-interest in a TV station, won FCC approval to acquire the other half-interest but gave up the plan when Justice threatened a suit.) But the Department has never under the antitrust laws challenged the *renewal* of a TV license held by a newspaper in the same city, and it is not likely to start now. Such attempts might fail in any event, and at best they would have to be fought out through long trials on a city-by-city basis.

The FCC, in contrast, almost certainly has authority to decline to grant TV licenses, or license renewals, to the owners of local daily papers. In fact, for more than four years the FCC has been considering adoption of a general rule to that effect. This is the most significant attempt to deal with media concentration in this country since 1941-44, when the FCC similarly examined newspaper ownership of radio stations (and ultimately declined to adopt a rule banning such ownership, promising instead to deal with the problem on a case-by-case basis—which it has rarely done). The FCC's handling of the newspaper-TV issue deserves attention, and so does the news media's coverage of that handling.

In the thirty years since the FCC last inquired into newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership, two developments have transformed the media landscape. The rise of the colossus of television and the almost total envelopment of newspaper monopoly have made it obvious that any concern over media concentration must focus on newspaper-TV combinations. FCC Chairman Dean Burch, concurring in the commission's rule-making proposal (but without indicating how he would eventually vote), has put the problem succinctly: "There are only a few daily newspapers in each large city and their numbers are declining. There are only a few powerful VHF stations in these cities and their numbers cannot be increased. Equally important, the evidence shows that the very large majority of people get their news information from these two limited sources. Here then are the guts of the matter."

(In fact, newspaper-TV cross-ownership has probably done much to promote newspaper monopoly. If the Boston *Herald-Traveler* was kept alive by subsidies from its TV station—as the media were at pains to point out—the more typical effect of newspaper-TV combinations has been to kill off competing papers that lacked a local TV affiliation. This was illustrated most recently—without media notice—by the death of the *Daily News* in Washington, where both surviving dailies own local TV stations. Goulden suggests in his *Washingtonian* article that the *Fort Worth Press*, another Scripps-Howard paper, may soon follow the *Daily News* into the graveyard. That would not be surprising, since the *Press* is the only one of four dailies in Dallas-Fort Worth without a local TV affiliate.)

Concern over media concentration, and local newspaper-TV combinations in particular, was not a bureaucratic figment of the FCC. Vice President Agnew, his political motivation notwithstanding, raised a real issue in his speech at Montgomery, Ala., in November 1969. "The American people should be made aware of the

trend toward monopolization of the great public information vehicles and the concentration of more and more power over public opinion in fewer and fewer hands," Agnew declared, and went on to attack newspaper-broadcast combinations specifically (albeit only those of *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*). The President's Commission on Violence recommended in its 1969 report that "private and governmental institutions encourage the development of competing news media and discourage increased concentration of control over existing media." Hubert Humphrey—who, like Agnew, has since dropped the subject—wrote in a syndicated newspaper column in December 1969 that "the really serious questions involving the media should be continually raised," and included among those questions, "Is there too much concentration of media ownership?" and "Should newspapers be prevented from owning broadcast stations in the same city?"

Congress itself, by passing the Newspaper Preservation Act of 1970, espoused a policy designed to preserve individual ownership of the two newspapers in a city in order to provide "separate and independent voices"; the policy applies at least as strongly to separate ownership of a newspaper and a TV station, where there is no need to sacrifice economic competition through an antitrust exemption. (Nonetheless, many of the publishers who led the lobbying for the Newspaper Preservation Act—such as Scripps-Howard, Newhouse, Hearst and other chains—hold TV licenses in cities where they publish newspapers and are now lobbying equally hard to defeat the FCC's proposed rule.)

The public's opinion on this subject has gone strangely unsolicited. In the fall of 1970, however, a Gallup poll on public attitudes toward the media, commissioned by *Newsweek*, contained some questions on concentration. The story was rather vague, and there is no guarantee

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it was not affected by the corporate bias of the magazine's owners—proprietors also of *The Washington Post* and a TV station in Washington. Nonetheless, the reported results were interesting, especially since the media have not exactly drilled the subject into the public's consciousness.

Newsweek began, "But people did not seem to be of a mind to tamper very much with how the press is run —or owned." It went on to report what seemed to be a different story: "Should newspaper chains—joint ownership of several papers in different cities—be permitted? Sixty-four per cent say yes, only twenty-four no. Should a chain also be allowed to control broadcasting stations? Half of those approving of chains said yes, 35 per cent no." *Newsweek* did not say it, but this seems to mean that 46 per cent, a majority of those responding, either would not permit chains or would not allow them to control broadcast stations. (Twenty-four per cent opposed chains entirely, while 35 per cent of the 64 per cent who approved of chains amounts to another 22 per cent.) A final item was reported by *Newsweek* without comment: "What about joint ownership of the newspaper and a TV station in a city with only one paper? Forty-four per cent said no, forty-one per cent yes."

The most potent expressions of concern over media concentration have come from the Department of Justice and, in response, from the FCC. In August 1968 the Department, in a filing with the FCC, pointed to "the existing concentration of media ownership in many of the major cities," and recommended that the commission do something about it—namely, adopt a rule divorcing the ownership of daily newspapers and TV stations in the same city. The proposal was a bombshell which the newspaper and broadcast industries have been striving ever since to defuse. The FCC entertained "comments" on the proposal for a prolonged period. Four times it extended the deadline at the request of the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB). Finally, in April 1970, instead of making a decision, the commission simply repeated the proposal, this time as its own, for more comments.

Specifically, the FCC suggested a rule requiring the owners of daily newspapers and TV stations in the same city—and likewise of daily newspapers and radio stations, of which there are some 230 instances—to sell either the station or the newspaper within five years. Far from being Draconian, the proposal would have a gentle, cushioned impact. By allowing divestiture within five years, it would "forfeit" no broadcast licenses—unlike the FCC's maligned decision in the *WHDH* case. By banning only *local* combinations, it would allow trades between combination owners in different cities. A special dispensation would waive the capital gains tax on sales or exchanges resulting from the rule. In addition, the rule would be subject to waiver in individual cases, specifically if it was shown that the newspaper (or the TV station, as in the case of UHF) could not survive without subsidies from its local cross-media affiliate.

(Few if any of the affected newspapers, however, will need such subsidies. Most of the papers are, of course, monopolies. Of the approximately ninety-three newspaper-TV combinations, some sixty-three involve the only daily newspaper publisher in town. In eight others, the TV licensee is one of two publishers who share a monopoly through a joint-operating agreement. In all the remaining cases except New York City—where the paper involved is the *Daily News*, which seems solvent—there are now only two competing publishers, each of whom typically has the morning or evening market all to himself, a situation in which the paper should be profitable if it even remotely deserves to be. Even the Washington *Star*, which according to Joseph Goulden was "losing money in box-car lots" before buying out the *Daily News*, says it expects miraculously to be in the black on newspaper operations for the fourth quarter of 1972.)

The proposed rule would do little to bring new or independent owners into the mass media—as the *WHDH* decision did—but it would at least break up control of the dominant media outlets in each city. The result would be greater diversity and competition in local news coverage, in editorial points of view on local issues, in concepts of media service, and of course in the economic sphere. There would be a freer flow of news, commentary and criticism on the many stories in which one of the local outlets, or its owner, was interested. One can see advantages at both ends, for example, if *The Washington Post* were to swap its TV station in Washington for the one in Chicago owned by the Chicago *Tribune*, or for one of the newspaper-owned stations in Dallas or Houston.

After reiterating in April 1970 the proposal made by the Justice Department in August 1968, the FCC started all over again with another protracted process of receiving comments. This included four *more* extensions of time granted to the NAB and the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), before the process finally came to an end in August 1971. It is now more than a year since then, more than two and a half years since the FCC first aired the rule, and more than four years since the original nudge by the Justice Department. Yet the FCC still has not acted, and according to reports last fall in *Television Digest*, an authoritative

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trade journal, it has put the newspaper-broadcast proposal "on the back burner."

The reasons for the delay are not hard to find. The FCC's proposal has been the target of all-out opposition by the newspaper and broadcast industries. NAB alone has raised and spent more than $300,000 in the fight. It has hired Lee Loevinger, who resigned as an FCC commissioner in 1968 to represent broadcast interests, as special counsel to present its case to the FCC. Numerous "studies" opposing the rule have been commissioned from the academic world and elsewhere (conspicuously absent is a public opinion poll), and scores of opposing comments prepared by Washington lawyers have descended on the FCC. (ANPA tells the commission that opposing comments have come from "more than 150 responsible and informed publishers, broadcasters, press associations, and other spokesmen for the nation's newspapers and broadcast stations"; while the proposed rules "have been supported so far by a *total* of only five pleadings.") Meanwhile, the industries have lobbied extensively to arouse opposition to the proposal from Congress and the White House.

And through it all the nation's news outlets, with only the fewest exceptions, have somehow overlooked the story. The FCC's proposal to break up some ninety newspaper-TV combinations in cities throughout the country, and some 230 newspaper-radio combinations, has received scant notice nationally and even less on the local level where its effect would be felt. As those legions of "responsible and informed publishers [and] broadcasters" have filed comments with the FCC opposing the breakup of their local combinations, one wonders why so few of them have found their actions worth reporting by the newspapers and broadcast stations involved.

Under cover of the blackout, the industry's lobbying campaign has paid off handsomely at the White House. The Administration's two chief spokesmen on media matters, Herbert Klein, communications director, and Clay T. Whitehead, director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy, have made the circuit of broadcasters' and publishers' conventions expressing White House opposition to the FCC's proposal. At an NAB convention in 1970, for example, Klein "praised newspaper ownership of stations." Whitehead told the ANPA convention last April that adoption of the proposal "would be a great mistake," adding: "We are much more concerned about performance than who gets to own what." President Nixon himself may have conveyed the same message during the private meeting he held with thirty leading broadcast executives at the White House on June 22. By supporting the industry and opposing the FCC's proposal, the White House is repudiating the position of its own Justice Department, which has continued to urge the FCC to adopt the rule.

Meanwhile, local media concentration is kept in suspension—and the status quo preserved—by a game of legal salugi whereby the FCC and the courts keep a resolution of the issue away from the public. With the unique exception of the *WHDH* case, the commission and the courts have been taking the position that challenges to the renewal of broadcast licenses held by local daily newspapers should not be considered on a case-by-case basis, since nonrenewal would mean "forfeiture" of the license. The issue should be considered instead, they have declared, in the context of an across-the-board rule such as the FCC has proposed, since that would allow for sale or exchange of the license involved (or of the newspaper).

In February 1970, for example, the Federal Court of Appeals in Washington sustained the FCC's renewal of one of the broadcast licenses held by the media empire of the Mormon Church in Salt Lake City, but only because the FCC "is seriously engaged in a sweeping policy review" of local media concentration. Last June, more than two years later, another panel of the same court similarly upheld the FCC's action in renewing, without a hearing on the concentration issue, the TV license held by the *Evening Star* in Washington. Again the court relied on the fact that "the FCC is currently investigating —in the context of the rulemaking proceeding—whether it should adopt rules which would require divestiture by newspapers or other multiple owners in a given market." But the FCC, after four years, continues to stall.

The apparent objective of those who oppose the rule, both within and outside the commission, is to keep the proceeding on ice at least until next summer. By then the FCC will have lost Commissioner Nicholas Johnson, who strongly favors the rule (his term ends in June), and probably also Chairman Burch, who may favor it (he is expected to resign). Nixon replacements can be expected to be safe for the industry on this issue. (So, probably, can Commissioner Benjamin L. Hooks, whom Nixon appointed last summer to fill one of the Democratic seats on the commission. Hooks, who is black, has stood up vigorously for the interests of minorities, while voting the industry line on other issues.)

Case-by-Case Approach: The Saga of KRON-TV

Turning to the arguments on the proposed rule, one finds—with a certain dizzy feeling—that while the FCC has rejected the case-by-case approach to renewal proceedings on the ground that the newspaper-broadcast issue should be handled by rule making, the chief ground on which the commission is urged to reject the proposed rule is that the issue should be handled through the case-by-case approach. As ANPA puts it, "The commission's asserted objectives of promoting diversification of viewpoints and economic competition in local markets can best be achieved on an *ad hoc* basis." And Herbert Klein of the White House, addressing an NAB meeting, chimes in: "While there is always a danger in having too much power in the hands of a few, cases ought to be examined individually. A blanket rule applying to everyone is not the answer."

Until recently, the case-by-case approach was easy to advocate because it had never been tried. It may now be examined, however, in the one case where the FCC has undertaken that kind of inquiry into alleged abuses of media cross-ownership. KRON-TV of San Francisco is owned by the Chronicle Publishing Co., publisher of the city's only morning newspaper (and partner, since 1965, in a joint-operating agreement with the only evening news-

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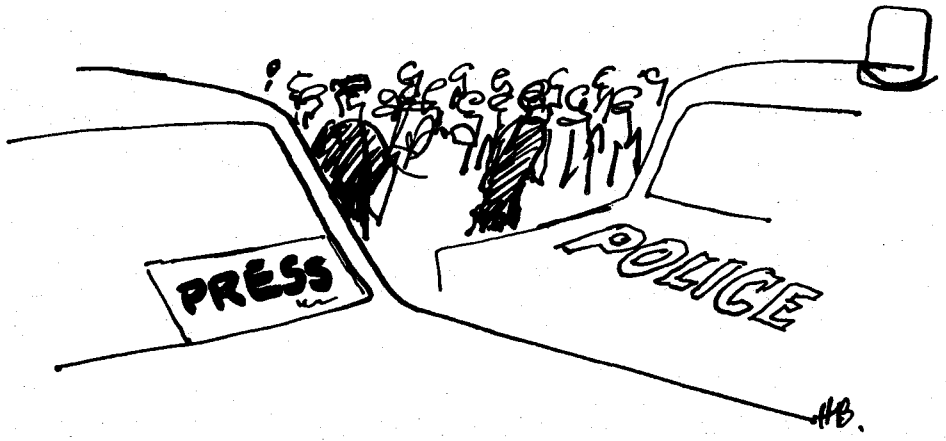

paper, the Hearst-owned *Examiner).* The case that has been brought charges distortion of news on the TV station to advance the owner's newspaper interests; distortion of the newspaper's contents to promote the owner's TV interests; and distortion of TV news to promote the owner's interest in obtaining cable-TV franchises in the San Francisco area.

Ordinarily, allegations that a broadcast licensee has distorted the news to further his own interests will not be given a hearing by the FCC. It is not that the commission condones such conduct; on the contrary, it has declared that "slanting of the news amounts to a fraud upon the public and is patently inconsistent with the licensee's obligation to operate his facilities in the public interest." The reason lies, rather, in the FCC's declaration that it will "eschew a censor's role, including efforts to establish news distortion in situations where government intervention would constitute a worse danger than the possible rigging itself." The FCC therefore will not inquire into charges of news distortion unless presented with a special sort of evidence—"substantial extrinsic evidence of motives inconsistent with the public interest." To illustrate the kind of "extrinsic evidence" that would meet this test, the commission has regularly offered one example: "testimony of a station employee concerning his instructions from management," or documentary evidence of such instructions. "For example, if it is asserted by a newsman that he was directed by the licensee to slant the news, that would raise serious questions as to the character qualifications of the licensee. . . ."

Given this evidentiary threshold, it becomes apparent that if cases can only be "examined individually," as Herbert Klein suggests, they are unlikely to be examined at all, and not necessarily because abuses do not exist. Not many newsmen will be willing to blow the whistle on their employer by presenting the FCC with evidence of improper directives from management, an act that must be done publicly and is very likely to ruin the career of the newsman who does it.

However, in the *KRON* case that is what happened. Albert Kihn, a news cameraman who worked for KRON for eight years, became disenchanted with events in the newsroom, kept a diary and collected evidence, and in the fall of 1968, when the station's license was up for renewal, told his story to the FCC. (Kihn has not since been regularly employed in broadcast journalism.) On the basis of Kihn's allegations, the FCC held up renewal of the license and ordered a hearing to determine whether "the licensee has attempted to slant news and public affairs programs to serve its business interests."

The hearing was held in San Francisco for thirty-seven days in 1970. On March 1, 1971, the FCC's hearing examiner, Chester F. Naumowicz, Jr., resolved all the issues in favor of the KRON management and recommended renewal of the license. The FCC must review this recommendation and make the final decision (subject to court appeal), but as yet—almost two years later—it has not done so. Meanwhile, KRON continues to operate on the license issued in 1965 and not removed in 1968. When another three-year renewal period fell due in the fall of 1971, the station did not even file a renewal application. It thus avoided the "petitions to deny" filed against all the other major San Francisco TV stations by citizens' groups complaining of discrimination in hiring and programming. KRON has also avoided, by virtue of the FCC's hearing, any competing applications for its license that might have been filed in 1968 or 1971. The lesson seems to be that, the way the FCC runs things, not having a license is better than having one.

The facts in the *KRON* case, as determined by the hearing examiner, have a good deal of relevance to the FCC's proposed rule on newspaper-broadcast combinations. Notwithstanding his conclusion in favor of the station owner, the examiner's report demonstrates two things: *(1)* common ownership of more than one media outlet in the same city, and of a daily newspaper and a TV station in particular, does have harmful effects; and *(2)* the case-by-case approach is ill-suited to dealing with them.

Even while exonerating the KRON management of any "abuse" of its newspaper-TV cross-ownership, the examiner determined that the public had been harmed by the common control in at least one important instance. This occurred in September 1965, when the *Chronicle* and Hearst were about to put into effect the joint-operating agreement between their San Francisco newspapers. The agreement, signed in October 1964 but kept secret, not only stipulated joint publication of the *Chronicle* in the morning and the *Examiner* in the afternoon (with a 50-50 split of all profits from both papers), but also eliminated what was then San Francisco's third daily, the *News-Call Bulletin,* also published by Hearst.

As the hearing examiner found, the story of the up-

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coming merger began to break in the week before its announcement by the two publishers on September 10, 1965. During this period two TV stations and various radio stations in San Francisco covered the story, reporting "such things as meetings of unions which might be affected, and alterations on the physical plants of the newspapers involved." But there was no coverage in any of San Francisco's three newspapers prior to the September 10th announcement, with the single exception that on September 5, "the *Chronicle* published a reference to it [the impending merger] based on a story from *The New York Times* wire service." Meanwhile, "no mention of the matter was made on KRON-TV" before the publishers' announcement.

The examiner found, as indeed was admitted, that KRON stayed mum on orders from the station's chief executive. When the story began to break elsewhere, KRON newsmen "importuned their superiors for permission to cover the story," but were denied. The station's chief executive, though a vice president of the Chronicle Publishing Co., was not aware of the joint-operating agreement, and at this point telephoned the *Chronicle*'s publisher to "ascertain the validity of the rumors." But the publisher "refused to comment," whereupon the station chief "issued the instructions which blocked the KRON newsmen from broadcasting the story until the newspapers issued a statement on the matter."

The examiner concluded that this was "a reasonable reaction to a unique and delicate situation, rather than an attempt to suppress news." While "obviously a local newspaper merger was highly newsworthy," any coverage by KRON "would be publicly regarded as based on 'inside' information," and since the station had no inside information, the public would have been misled. It was a situation "where neither course was free of hazards," and therefore "a decision to say nothing was not unreasonable."

It follows, then, that the newspaper-broadcast tie was necessarily harmful to the public's interest in the news. Whichever course the station took, the public would suffer—either through not hearing of a "highly newsworthy" story, or through being misled into thinking it was getting inside information when it wasn't. The situation, moreover, may well have been deliberate, but it was not unique. A similar problem arises whenever a broadcasting station is confronted with a potential news story involving a commonly owned newspaper, or vice versa—occasions by no means rare in these days of public interest in the mass media and the frequent controversies involving them.

Several other incidents in the *KRON* case show the difficulties of proving that common ownership had any effect on the station's news coverage. Even when management has plainly ordered special treatment for stories affecting its other media interests, the motive for the order may be impossible to prove, or it may be argued that no harm was done because there is no proof that the order was carried out. Thus, Kihn produced for the FCC two memoranda issued to the KRON news staff. The first required clearance by one of the station's three top executives before the broadcasting of any story "relating to the public relations image of any radio or television station in the 50 states and their parent companies and/or networks . . .," adding that the order did not apply to any publishing company "except, of course, the Chronicle Publishing Company." The second stated:

> You are all aware of company policy regarding the reporting of labor strife within the broadcasting industry and/or local newspapers. However, it has become apparent that some of you do not understand the full intent of this policy. It is therefore mandatory that any story relating to broadcast industry labor problems and/or local newspaper problems be cleared with the News Director *before* airing. . . .

KRON witnesses testified that the motive behind the memos was something other than self-interested news distortion. (The first was designed "to promote accuracy in stories concerning that with which [the management] was personally familiar," the second to counteract the feared pro-labor bias of the news staff.) The hearing examiner, however, found it unnecessary to consider the issue. Although a former KRON assignment editor testified "that the existence of these memos resulted in self-censorship by newsmen," the examiner dismissed them from consideration because "the record does not identify any story that was not covered, or that was covered differently, because these memos were extant."

In other situations it was clear enough that a story was covered, not covered, or covered in a particular way under orders from management (lacking "extrinsic evidence" of this fact, the FCC would not have set the issue for hearing). The problem was to prove that management had given an order from improper, self-interested motive. The examiner laid down a strict burden of proof, approaching the standard for conviction of a crime. Since the FCC eschews "the role of a censor imputing improper motivation for programming of which it disapproves," he said, "adverse conclusions under this issue are to be reached only if KRON's improper motives have been established by the most clear, convincing and unambiguous evidence." Several incidents illustrated the problems of showing improper motive by this standard, and perhaps by any other.

One involved the municipality of South San Francisco, at a time when the *Chronicle* was competing there for the CATV franchise. KRON newsmen were told, in a memo from the news director dated December 20, 1966:

> Between now and the first of February, let us concentrate a little heavier on *South* San Francisco—if warranted. HPS would like to make those people happy. . . . ["HPS" was Harold P. See, president of KRON-TV and also of the *Chronicle*-owned cable-television company.]

A second memo from the news director, dated February 6, 1967, ordered coverage of a library dedication in South San Francisco and added: "HPS wants to make sure that the mayor of South SF is prominent in any film we do!" KRON covered the dedication, but most of the film it took was ruined by the laboratory, a fact that led See to write a letter of explanation to the Mayor of South San Francisco. See admitted the letter "was motivated by CATV considerations," but denied that "the dedication coverage was related to a CATV interest."

Weighing this evidence, the examiner found that it

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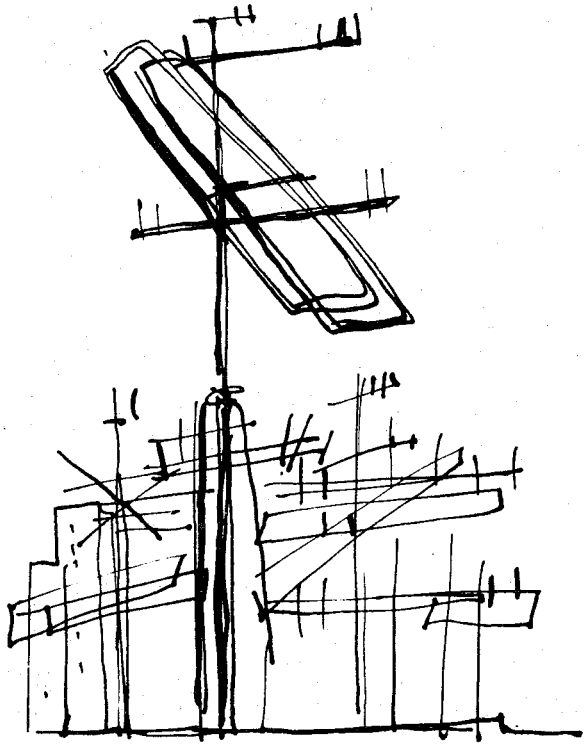

demonstrated "an unusual interest in a political figure," but did not prove that See's motive in ordering the coverage arose from the CATV interest. See denied such a motive, and there was "no direct evidence in contradiction," the examiner said. "While such an intention might be inferred from . . . [the] February 6 memo, the inference could only be based on a conjectural choice of possible motives for See's interest in South San Francisco. If KRON is to be convicted on circumstantial evidence, the circumstances should be considerably less ambiguous."

Proof of the motive for a news decision is not supplied, moreover, by a statement of the news director. Several KRON newsmen testified that, in the South San Francisco incident and on another occasion when KRON's president ordered unusual news coverage to coincide with the *Chronicle*'s application for a CATV franchise, they asked the news director the reason for the special treatment, and he "responded that the coverage was relative to the seeking of a CATV franchise in that area." The examiner held this evidence to be "without probative weight." He explained:

> The individuals to whom [the statements] were attributed were middle management personnel whose duties were related to the operation of KRON as a television station, not the business activities of either the station or its owners. If, in fact, KRON programming was being used to advance *Chronicle*'s business interests, it would have been necessary to issue appropriate orders to these people, but it would have been neither necessary nor natural to have informed them of the motives for such orders. Hence, there is no presumption that their statements in this area are based on actual knowledge.

Proof of the business motive for a news directive can come, then, only from an executive high enough on the corporate ladder to be involved in the business activity. And as the examiner says, it would be "neither necessary nor natural" for such an executive to declare his improper motive. As long as top executives have the minimal prudence not to incriminate themselves out of their own mouths when they dictate news decisions, there is apparently no way to produce the necessary "direct proof" that their motive was improper.

The examiner's analysis of newsroom procedures also disclosed a dismal view of the professional journalist. In the examiner's opinion, when a newsman assigned to a story asks the reason for the coverage, and is given a reason by the news director, there is no basis for assuming the answer to be honest. As he explained:

> . . . If a newsman disagrees with an assignment or editing he can voice his objection with some assurance that his opinion will be considered. While final decision remains in the hands of a supervisor, he will tend not to simply give orders to a disagreeing employee but to provide some explanation for his action. Only thus can friction be avoided when the newsman, who is his own boss while covering the story, is obliged to conform to the decisions of others with respect to assignment and editing. However, since the supervisor's motive is usually not to conduct an exchange of ideas, but to secure the cooperation of his subordinate, his explanation for his actions may or may not be candid.

Thus, it is no part of the journalist's function to know the reason for what he is doing. If he asks, he may have to be given a reason, but only to avoid "friction" and "secure [his] cooperation." The journalistic process will work just as well, the management and the news director will be acting just as legitimately, regardless of whether the reason given is "candid."

Even if a top executive is foolhardy enough to admit an improper motive in the hearing of someone who will testify to the fact, he still has a line of protection. In two incidents in the *KRON* case, newsmen testified that they had indeed heard such statements from the mouths, or in the presence, of members of top management. Not surprisingly, the executives denied it, so the issue became a conflict of credibility between them and the newsmen. The examiner in both cases believed the executives and discredited the newsmen. One may wonder whether the contrary result would ever be reached, given the FCC's reluctance to declare a broadcaster a liar, especially as to his own motive, and given also the steep burden of proof the examiner adopted.

In any event, this is the issue the case will come down to. Even after the initial hurdle is surmounted by employee testimony as to questionable news orders from management, and after the other obstacles embedded in the case-by-case approach are overcome, the FCC will have to determine which of two witnesses is lying as to the motive for a news decision.

A final example involved alleged distortion of *Chronicle* editorial material to promote the owner's interest in the TV station. The FCC, in its hearing order, had cited an allegation that a *Chronicle* column by Charles McCabe "had been censored because the article urged 'citizens to contact the FCC about violence on television.' " At the hearing, McCabe testified that in his ten years of writing a daily column for the *Chronicle*, "perhaps a total of less than one hundred words has ever been censored from the content of my column, with one exception":

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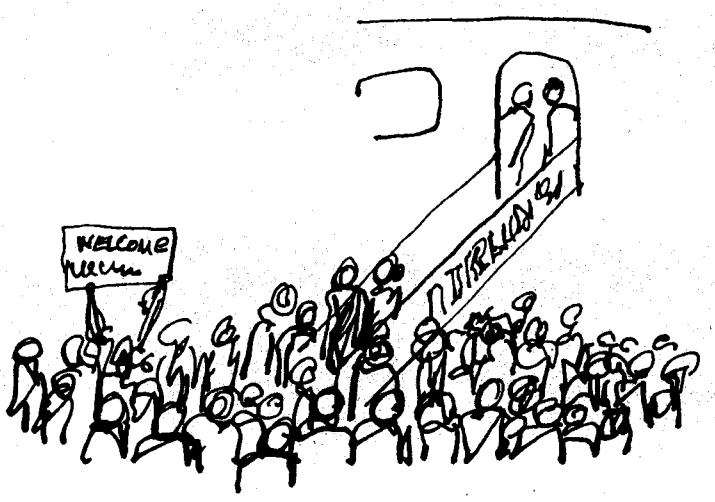
a column on TV violence, written after the death of Robert Kennedy, which urged readers to complain to the FCC and which the newspaper had "killed outright." McCabe's entire testimony was stricken from the record by the hearing examiner—notwithstanding inclusion of the item in the FCC's hearing order—on the ground that inquiry into what a newspaper prints would be inconsistent with the First Amendment.

If this ruling was correct, it may be asked how the FCC, using the case-by-case approach, can ever protect the public against the various possible abuses of newspaper-broadcast cross-ownership that may affect the content of the newspaper. The FCC has not hesitated to denounce in principle the slanting of content to promote an owner's ancillary interests, and has considered newspaper content in a number of such cases. For instance, it has frequently considered (but always found a pretext for rejecting) charges that a newspaper discriminates in favor of its own broadcast stations in its TV and radio listings and related material. Also, the commission has considered whether the two daily newspapers in Minneapolis-St. Paul used their sports coverage to coerce professional ball clubs into granting their broadcast rights to a local radio station jointly owned by the papers.

Yet in refusing to hear such testimony, the examiner had a point. Even though a newspaper's right to publish does not include the right to hold a broadcast license, and even though the FCC correctly insists that distortion by a newspaper to promote the interests of the station would be improper action by the licensee, and even though the FCC will hold a hearing only in the rare case presenting "extrinsic evidence" of such an abuse, a governmental inquiry into what a newspaper prints or does not print, and into its motive for doing so, must still cause discomfort. Whether or not it would be unconstitutional, such an inquiry should be avoided unless there is no other way to protect the public's interest in an undistorted flow of news (an interest sharpened, of course, by the absence of competing newspapers in the city).

The objections to such a proceeding are not limited, however, to issues involving the content of the newspaper. If it is undesirable for the FCC to probe the news decisions and underlying motives of a newspaper, it is undesirable for it to do the same thing with respect to a broadcast station. Yet that is what the *KRON* hearing mainly consisted of. Whatever one thinks of the facts of the *KRON* case or of the hearing examiner's decision, that kind of inquiry is at best a necessary evil, being difficult to square with the constitutional freedoms of the broadcast press. But under the case-by-case approach, such hearings are the only protection the public has against the most flagrant abuses of power by the owners of the dominant media outlets in cities throughout the country. As the *KRON* case illustrates, it is not much protection. In short, such hearings seem the worst of all possible worlds. Yet this is the case-by-case approach, so strongly touted by broadcasters, publishers and the White House as the preferred alternative to the FCC's proposed rule on newspaper-broadcast combinations.



What we have, in sum, is a shell game. Outraged by the *WHDH* decision, broadcasters and publishers have persuaded the FCC to renounce the case-by-case approach to media concentration in favor of rule making. Accordingly, the commission and the Court of Appeals have been refusing, out of deference to the pending rule-making proceeding, to consider the concentration issue when licenses come up for renewal. This has now gone on for more than four years, with no rule-making decision yet in sight. Meanwhile, the ground is prepared for the FCC eventually to abandon the proposed rule on the basis that the case-by-case approach—the approach illustrated by the *KRON* proceeding—is better after all.

It is improbable that the Court of Appeals will tolerate the FCC's inaction indefinitely, and the industry is therefore working on a permanent solution for its problem. It will be pushing in the new Congress for a license-renewal bill that would extend the license period from three to five years and require renewal—regardless of any "petitions to deny" or competing applications—if only the licensee has made a "good faith effort" to serve the public. The bill would prevent the FCC from considering media concentration in renewal proceedings, and would thus knock out permanently the case-by-case approach. It would leave a compliant FCC free to abandon the rule-making proposal, and hence to walk away from the problem of media concentration in American cities. While waiting for the bill to pass, however, the industry will find it useful to keep the rule-making proceeding alive, lest it lose its shield against case-by-case action. The FCC can be expected to accommodate this desire.

The Nixon Administration's license-renewal bill, announced by Clay Whitehead in December, is similar to the industry's own proposal. It would give the broadcasters the five-year renewal period and essentially what they want in the form of nearly ironclad protection against challenges or protests at renewal time. In return for this financial security, it cleverly seeks to require the station owners to censor network news to rid it of "ideological plugola" and "elitist gossip." While the controversies over news censorship and renewal standards are apt to get most of the attention, the Administration bill, like the industry's own, would also prohibit the FCC from pursuing the case-by-case approach to media concentration. It would thereby assure perpetuation of the monopolized status quo in the control of the nation's newspapers and TV stations. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The Glop of the Wad

ST. GEORGE AND THE GODFATHER. *By Norman Mailer. New American Library, Signet Books. 229 pp. Paper $1.50.*

ROBERT SOLOTAROFF
Mr. Solotaroff is a member of the English Department of the University of Minnesota and has recently completed a book on Norman Mailer.

Last spring I heard that Mailer had turned away from the nonfiction he had been rolling out at such a manic rate—four book-length works and another collection since 1968—and was hard at work on a new novel. This made fine sense, for the collection, *Existential Errands* (1972), was his most mercenary yet, and the last two books of nonfiction, *Of a Fire on the Moon* (1970) and *The Prisoner of Sex* (1971), were both quite a cut below the two he put out in 1968, *The Armies of the Night* and *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*. The quick rush of titles is a bit dizzying, but then it's a sort of bibliographical counterpart to the sliding feeling of betrayal I—a grudging Mailer fan—experience when I discover that he has once again seized the hot issue or event of the year and written it up. A book on the Apollo 11 flight (one-third of which was published in the *Life* of the Luce chain Mailer has so often railed against) immediately followed by one on Women's Liberation; what seems to accelerate most is his trendiness. Of course he offers apologies. Early in the moon book Mailer indirectly confesses that he had to write it to pay his debts and get enough ahead "to live and think for a year." And not far into *The Prisoner of Sex* he mumbles that he should not have attempted this book because the themes of Women's Liberation are the themes of the huge novel he has been promising since 1959. But the *Walküre* of Women's Liberation have been trying to destroy both him and the mystery of reproduction. Also, he sometimes thinks that "to be in the center of any situation was . . . the real marrow of his bone . . . his genius was to mobilize on the instant." And so here is *The Prisoner of Sex* in which Mailer takes on the supposed Liberation—to him the sexual vanguard of leveling totalitarianism—and again runs through his role as The Last Great Romantic by arguing, for example, that the ovum might have a mind of its own or that a truly liberated woman might scorn the technological paraphernalia of douches, coital positions and schedules and choose at some unconscious level of herself what sex her child will be, or even whether or not she will become pregnant.

All of which is much less convincing than the fine social and literary criticism in *The Prisoner of Sex*; in any case the jousts with Women's Liberation and the sexologues' statistical dragons are carried on with a whimsy nowhere present in the moon book. There Mailer's repetitious and sometimes sodden writing, and his often outlandish attempts to keep the corporate world from seizing the very symbol of creativity, cripple what might have been a spectacular performance. It seemed, then, that this writer who had so often proclaimed the need to raise higher the roof beam of literature had turned back to fiction because he had realized that he was simply treading water in his attempts to inject mystery into events which obdurately resisted the transfusion.

Consequently, I regarded the piece on the Democratic convention which appeared in the *Life* of July 28 as a quick side trip for money to help finance the novel he might yet write. The essay did nothing to alter my feeling that the nonfiction stratagems were wearing thin. Of course there were the arresting images and fine on-the-wing characterizations always present in Mailer's reportage. Two examples from a score of contenders: the ramp on the plane that the President had lent Governor Wallace "flew out in sections like an animated giant pterodactyl's tongue in a King Kong film"; Wallace's national campaign director, Charles Snider, "stood in front of the podium with his legs apart, as if at parade rest, weight on the balls of his toes. Wearing a pale cream suit, a yellow shirt and a well-chosen-light-blue-and-brown figured tie, he suggested the aplomb of a marine who is wearing the world's best clothes." But what tired stuff so much of the rest was: the invocation of Mailer's God locked in cosmic battle with Mailer's Devil; the sense that a revelation was near; the suggestion that the average voter in the booth might be "engaged in some inarticulate transaction with eternity"; the wheezing start of the mystery-making machine in the first paragraph as Mailer writes that the convention offers so many questions and so little overt drama that he will have to rely on—most unconvincing modesty—his poor, slow brain; the final conclusion that the peculiar quality of the convention followed from the "insufficient evil in the room." This seemed to be a smirking reminder of how familiar *he* was with evil, all too reminiscent of the very silly, black velvet rustlings of those satanic Kellys in *An American Dream*. Well, perhaps evil will be worked up more palpably in the novel.

Three months later I heard that Mailer had a new book out. What energy. He's finished the novel already. Two more days and there was a review of *St. George and the Godfather*. The piece was only an installment. Tricked again! So I picked the book up, smugly convinced that I knew why it had to be bad.

Tricked and retricked. The Manichean creakings of the piece fall away or show themselves as shrewd preparations for the main show, which is the coverage of the Republican convention. In fact, *St. George and the Godfather* ranks high among Mailer's nonfiction. It is not as good a work as *The Armies of the Night* but then none of the nonfiction is going to be until two conditions are met: Mailer must again find an event in which his fascination with what is happening to Norman Mailer so wonderfully meshes with a more diffused drama of social discovery; there must be the excitement generated by a sense of new stylistic possibility, as with his perception of the potential of the third-person autobiography in *The Armies of the Night*. A recurrence of this happy blend does not appear imminent. But *St. George and the Godfather* is at least as good as the book about the 1968 convention, *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*. That is no small achievement, since the recent conventions offered Mailer nothing like the reportorial possibilities of the Chicago riot. But what he made of what he had gives his new book a depth of feeling which has been absent from his work since *The Armies of the Night*.

In the version published in book form, Mailer fleshed out his account of the Democratic convention by adding about 40 pages to the 45 or so which had already appeared in *Life*. One of the new

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chapters deals with McGovern's extricating, from his platform, planks on welfare, abortion, homosexuality and drugs —any one of which could be shaped by opponents into a political crucifix. Supporting those positions might well drive to revenge those voters who are defined less by their political allegiances than by their dissatisfactions and resentments. This group Mailer calls the *wad*, and the most pleasant surprise of the book is the great subtlety with which Mailer advances the reasonable proposal that the evil absent from the Democratic convention is the ability to manipulate the fears and hatreds of the wad. Which brings one back to the fact that shortly after the book appeared, Richard Milhous Nixon won re-election by one of the greatest majorities in the history of the Presidency. The only silliness in *The Siege of Chicago* followed from Mailer's 1968 broodings over whether Nixon, resurrected after his losses to Kennedy and Pat Brown, was a "new and marvelously complex improvement of a devil, or angel-in-chrysalis, or both." The new Vietnamese crop of deaths, mutilations, torture, refugees and bomb craters of course renders obscene any conjectures about The Good Angel Richard. In fact, at one point in *St. George and the Godfather* Mailer refers to his need to restore his own powers as a witness. Restored they were; his loathing of the ease with which so many Americans were ready to settle for Nixon's Vietnamese policy hovers over his account of the Republican doings. Yet that account is not sanctimonious, for a good many reasons—his fascination with the participants; certain sympathies for some staunch Republicans and for the wad itself; even his own impurity, when he is easily tempted in an interview with Kissinger to engage in the Establishment's game of moral concealment.

Something singular follows from Mailer's confrontation with Nixon's manipulative genius, something akin to the ruminations of Rubashov in Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*. Rubashov wrote in his diary that "we were neo-Machiavellians in the name of universal reason. . . . History has taught us that often lies served her better than the truth, for man is sluggish and has to be led through the desert for forty years before each step in his development." Rubashov works out an addition to Marx's dogma of the relations of the base and superstructure; thus he can "scientifically" argue that the masses must be totally manipulated after each new productive surge. And just as Rubashov claims that only the Marxists toiled with the masses in the mud of history, Mailer argues that

> Nixon was the artist who had discovered the laws of vibration in all the frozen congelations of the mediocre . . . only Nixon had thought to look for the harmonics of the mediocre, the minuscule dynamic in the overbearing static, the discovery that this inert lump which resided in the bend of the duodenum of the great American political river was more than just an indigestible political mass suspended between stomach and bowel but had indeed its own capacity to quiver and creep and crawl and bestir itself to vote if worked upon with unremitting care and no relaxation of control. . . . This was the major work of Nixon's intellectual life, to chart the undiscovered laws of movement in the glop of the wad.

Tracing Nixon and his laws, Mailer is again stalking a mystery, but his discoveries are sometimes compelling and, in one way or another, always arresting. The way in which Nixon has fused his own personality with the nausea potential of TV, his perception that much of the wad feels that the bombs dropped in Vietnam somehow kill hippies at home, the ease with which he taught most of the Republican right wing "to take ten steps to the left and smile at the center"—all this is somehow true enough. Then Mailer gives us Nixon's Maxims, and their terse cynicism often creates an effective counterpoint. For example, the report of Daniel Ellsberg's indictment of our activities in Southeast Asia is immediately followed by:

> *From Nixon's Maxims*: The Silent Majority, while often accused of being nonpolitical, actually prefer to have a definite idea and will often drift at surprising speed from one position to its opposite. May I point to the shift of opinion on the war in Vietnam. The American public once ready to get out is now ready to stay in and win provided no American blood is shed.

All of this is blended with reporting superior to that on the Democratic con-

THE LAKE OF THE WOODS

Winter began with the birches
turning to glass and the wild geese
over the lake nightly,
evacuating in their loud squadrons.

For weeks still there were roads,
light, and the repeating moons; but
slowly, through the sunk woods, snow
is climbing toward the cabins now

and twice already the cemetery has opened
its mouth and closed it again.
Nothing lives in the woods any longer,
only a crumbling moon and the stars

above the lake collapsing, one by one.
It is getting worse, and we will
survive as we are able:
out on the lake a man has chopped

a hole in the ice to fish through;
his son is snapping twigs from the pines,
it sounds like pistols, but
suddenly there is a fish on the ice.

Daily it worsens, but somehow
they know, the fish and the trees
and the men, that it is temporary,
that some bright morning the geese will return

singing down the runways of sunlight and lake water.
We are sure; or we have no memory,
any of us, of the ice
like an iron giant stalking the earth,

that deep beneath the snow,
the buried bottles and the wrecked boots,
beyond all further thaw a lost world
of lizards and leaves lies frozen in stone.

Richard Ryan

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vention—what a job Mailer does on the Young Voters for the President (YVP), on Goldwater, Pat Nixon, Agnew—and is informed by a subtle but pervasive moral point of view. In a 1969 interview Mailer said that a writer can always try to confound his enemies, and *St. George and the Godfather* certainly strikes back at those readers (like myself) who had decided that his nonfiction was atrophying. But Mailer in good form acts upon me much as the possibility of total electoral triumph acts upon the YVP gluttons. I want more and better. I still look forward to the novel. □

Those Highly Emotional People

THE ELIZABETHAN RENAISSANCE: The Cultural Achievement. *By A. L. Rowse. Charles Scribner's Sons. 412 pp. $12.50.*

SEYMOUR KLEINBERG
Mr. Kleinberg teaches English literature at Long Island University.

When people talk about A. L. Rowse's work, it is usual to concede his enormous knowledge about the English renaissance, particularly in the light of his fine study, *The England of Elizabeth,* and even the drier and narrower *Expansion of Elizabethan England.* These are the first two books of a trilogy, now concluded with *The Elizabethan Renaissance*—itself a study in two parts. *The Life of the Society* was published last year; the concluding half has now been issued as *The Cultural Achievement.* While Rowse's breadth of reference is still very much in evidence, *The Cultural Achievement* is a disappointment, the poorest part of the long work. It is less interesting than the preceding volumes, more irritating in its biases, and more repetitious.

At its best, the book manages to enliven the reader's interest even in subjects as specialized as 16th-century domestic arts. The outstanding chapter is probably the one on music, where Rowse's enthusiasm compensates for the eccentricity of such judgments of Elizabethan music as that "to anyone responsive to it there is no music (except occasionally in Bach and Mozart) that makes such an impact on heart and soul." The key word is responsive: one must have Rowse's deep love of the period as well as his knowledge in order to create the illusion that one's response is what an Elizabethan's might have been. Of course, it is not just any Elizabethan Rowse has in mind; his admiration of aristocracy colors all his judgments. And while almost any age may seem preferable to the one we live in, that is not enough to counteract the deficiencies of Rowse's arbitrary approach—glaring in a work of scholarship. It is also irritating to be told that though Donne was "fascinating to women and men friends alike, he was not a nice man," or that Marlowe has been consistently misunderstood and should be seen as that "rare thing in English, an intellectual poet."

Too much of the study, when it is scholarly, relies on the great work of former scholars. I am not faulting Rowse for his debt to past scholarship; who can write about science in the 16th century without recourse to the work of Burtt, Sarton and Butterfield? But that work has already been done well by such students, and Rowse's treatment is a popularization that can be satisfying to no one, neither the person familiar with the history of science nor the reader who needs information on the subject.

Rowse inscribes his volume to Burckhardt and Huizinga, and perhaps that is as valid a clue as any to his intention, and to the kind of audience he considered himself to be addressing. But if *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* and *The Waning of the Middle Ages,* monuments of cultural history, are his prototypes, then Rowse has failed even more acutely. His own book is really much closer to Oxford University Press's two-volume *Shakespeare's England: An Account of the Life and Manners of His Age,* first published in 1916 and reissued as late as 1962. It is worth noting that Gheeraert's portrait of Elizabeth is both on the cover of Rowse's book and the frontispiece of the Oxford collection of essays, which is more comprehensive and more modest in its treatment of the same subjects.

One is willing to grant Rowse certain obsessions which are trivial: he insists that Shakespeare was touring the English countryside as an actor in 1592-93, and he adduces three lines from a sonnet as documentation, further substantiating the example by referring to his own edition of the sonnets—a work whose reputation among scholars is a joke. But it is hard not to be impatient with remarks and attitudes that are less harmless. The constant snideness of his attack on middle-class puritanism as the sole cause of the bloody civil war is matched by his constant tired admiration of the aristocracy—as if the modern reader were still taking sides. His candor is not refreshing, it is only odd. Even if one were indifferent to a display of class bias in a scholarly work, what is an American reviewer to make

BLACK OUT

Entering the belly of the whale I'm lost
In the bowels of the parking garage
In the tunnels of the underground heating system

Entering the great land grants of the electrical power stations
Of the entire North American continent

Discovering the shuttered swirl of an oyster
And the distant swirl of the galaxy

In these intestinal tracts
Under the ribcage of the universe I'm lost,

Out there humming through the world's black wires
Conducted along like fish
Nudging bumpers in the current

For the guts of the matter is a cesspool
With long octopus fingers

Except when the lights finally fail
In every blacked out city

For reasons unknown, for love?
Walking up hundreds of stairs we rejoice.

Patricia Goedicke

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of the following analogy: Describing the stupidity and vulgarity of the London commoner gaping into the open pits where those recently dead of the plague were thrown, Rowse says, "Sixteenth century people were highly emotional—like Middle Easterners or the inhabitants of Belfast, or West Side, New York, today. . . ." It is not impertinent enough, and it is too much so. Readers who delight in being outraged have better places to go. □

A Fatalist in Theory and Practice

ENEMIES, A LOVE STORY. *By Isaac Bashevis Singer. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 280 pp. $6.95.*

ROBIN MacNAUGHTON
Miss MacNaughton is a writer who lives in New York City.

I. B. Singer's most recent novel is the first in which the author has chosen America as a locale. The setting is New York, a few years after World War II. The book is centered upon the grim, complex character of Herman Broder, a Polish refugee from the Nazi terror, who lives with his second wife, Yadwiga, in a cramped dwelling in the Coney Island section of Brooklyn.

Each day, Herman measures out what he takes to be a merciless existence, softened only by the presence of Masha, his beautiful, catlike mistress. However, when his first wife, Tamara, suddenly appears in New York in search of him, Herman begins to lose what little stability he had achieved. In a comedy of errors we follow his halfhearted attempts to conceal rather than resolve his polygamous-polyamorous situation—and at the same time to understand the reason for human suffering.

Like so many of I. B. Singer's characters, Herman is obsessed with the mysteries of the universe. He believes that all the processes of life, including his own actions and predicaments, are mystically predetermined. Yet, in contrast to what happens in Singer's other novels, the mystical focal point in this one is singularly unedifying. "What did civilization consist of if not murder and fornication?" Herman wonders during his wakeful nights. It is not the fact that such life-disparaging questions are so frequently posed that gives this novel its nihilistic tone. Rather, it is that Herman never finds any answers and, in the end, allows his quest for them to compromise his survival. (We are not told explicitly whether he simply flees his situation or commits suicide.)

This omission is one of the many instances in which the reader is kept in the dark. Either through carelessness or an intentional frugality with regard to the facts, Singer allows us to enter only part way into Herman Broder's past and present. And that is not enough. The information about Herman that the author chooses to share with us is simply too sparse.

For example, Herman's distaste for life is puzzling, for it is due only in part to the horrors experienced by his people. "In Herman there resided a sorrow that could not be assuaged. He was not a victim of Hitler. He had been a victim long before Hitler's day." Yet, Singer does not give us any insight into the nature of this sorrow. Are we supposed to infer that it has no reason, that it is simply a part of the fixed pattern of Herman's life? And, in that case, are we supposed to accept it as a psychological infirmity or as something more radical, mystical and fated? Again, unanswerable questions.

Whether or not Herman has any emotional depth is also left unclear. What we see of his emotions is mostly filtered through his relationships with the women in his life. Herman's feelings are bizarre, contradictory and self-contained. Masha accuses him of being a "mechanical man," and it is true that he appears wooden and puppetlike. That may be why it is easier to sympathize with Herman's women than it is to sympathize with Herman.

In fact, what exactly is love for Herman? Is he really capable of loving? In this connection his words and actions are suspect. When his first wife, Tamara, asks him to define his feelings for his mistress, Masha, he replies, "I cannot live without her." This does not really tell us anything. In fact, rather than a love, Masha appears to be a neurotic obsession. Perhaps that explains the violent intensity of their relationship. Masha evokes in Herman an animal energy, at once life-giving and destructive. "He based everything on the attraction of the sexes. In the beginning was lust. The godly, as well as the human principle, is desire."

But Herman also appears to be emotionally bound to his two wives, especially Tamara. Despite Masha's demands, he refuses to sever his relationship with either woman. Perhaps the author's comment upon him has a special bearing in this connection: "Some part of him enjoyed the thrill of being faced with ever-threatening catastrophe."

The silent, brooding Herman often serves as a kind of backdrop for the characters of the three women. Of these, Masha's is the most successfully developed. Tall, taut and frenetic, she holds Herman under a suffocating, witchlike power. She shares his view that life is hell for those without the courage to end it. She is compulsively cruel; her love is crazed and savage.

Tamara has survived the Nazi persecutions to witness the brutal murder of her mother and children. Desolation and despair haunt her even in her dreams, yet she still has a tenacious emotional strength. Her experiences have molded her into a grave woman, but one

BEHIND THE MOON

(1)
settling on tongues, owls close their claws
moles inspect the dark in pulsing passages
syllables flutter
then the moon is an owl's eye gliding
through bone and crystal

(2)
behind the moon, fluttering tongues weave legends
bones glow in the forest of breath
sorcerers inspect a scent left by the future
and stars, crystals buried in night's cloak

(3)
sorcerers wipe lips with sleeves of fleeing dreams
behind eyelids the earth revolves, shedding moss
naked, the earth is a glowing syllable
in legends bones have lips and breathe

Carolyn Stoloff

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who is at the same time wise and even saintly.

Herman's present wife, Yadwiga, once a peasant woman, is simple and servile. She had once been a servant to Herman and Tamara, and had saved Herman's life by hiding him during the Nazi occupation. Yadwiga is a colorless character who, up until the end, wanders about the tiny apartment like an automaton. Singer sketches her so scantily that she seems to be less than alive. But at the climax of the novel, Yadwiga suddenly becomes self-assertive, demanding her rights as a wife and insisting that she wants to have a child. Herman grants that demand and then disappears from her life forever.

Enemies imprisons the reader in a dismal, intense, narrow view of life. The dominant tone of the novel is melodrama, unnaturally strained to the point of comedy. The tension is released only after Herman disappears, Masha's mother dies, and Masha kills herself. The greater part of *Enemies* has a phantasmagorical quality. Its tone is consistently brittle and unrealistically exaggerated. By way of justification, the fate of the characters is referred to as the operations of "the powers."

Singer is, in a sense, imposing his philosophical bias on the reader. In order to understand Herman Broder, it is first necessary to accept his mystical rationale as a given. Unlike the existentialist hero, who accepts "contingency" and "absurdity" but who has an exacting idea of the responsibility implied by his "freedom," Herman is "a fatalist in practice as well as in theory," and not a man responsible for his own existence.

In the end, the test of any novel is whether the characters, their motivations and actions are universal enough to exceed the limits of philosophical preconceptions. *Enemies* does not succeed in terms of that criterion. Herman Broder's misfortune is not the intensity of his pain but his consummate passivity to his own life. The period of history that he has lived through does not adequately explain or justify that attitude. In consequence, he does not have the emblematic character that the author appears to claim for him. □

A Foretaste of Resignation

BEHIND THE DOOR. *By Giorgio Bassani. Translated by William Weaver. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 150 pp. $5.95.*

CHARLES LAM MARKMANN

Mr. Markmann, a frequent contributor, is a journalist, critic, novelist and translator. His latest book is The Buckleys, *which will be published this year by William Morrow & Co.*

When one sees "A Novel" on a book by Giorgio Bassani, one knows it is indeed a novel—not a verbal gymkhana, not an extended toilet scrawl, not a fantasia for unaccompanied cash register. *Behind the Door* is a real novel: a work of art. William Weaver's translation is as much a work of art as the novel itself, and I shall come back to it; Bassani has never been so well served in English. And another of the book's virtues is the evidence it provides that the assembly-line foremen who have so largely taken over the book factories have not wholly supplanted real editors: style has not been made to submit to "styling."

Bassani is the poet of Ferrara as Pavese is the poet of Turin—two cities that, for all their diverse magics, were not much more than names until their poets peopled them, and, as Svevo did with Trieste, made them capitals in the supra-nation of literature. "Oh, of course you like Bassani," a fellow Italophile, translator of Pavese, said with only a *sospetto* of disdain over the hundred miles of telephone wire: "you like Proust." Guilty on both counts.

Like Proust, Bassani is always the novelist of sensibilities. Like Proust's, his protagonists live intensely and primarily within themselves, and apparently they do not pay much attention to what the sociologically minded call the real world; they have little to say about it. And yet (and they know this from birth) it is so much a part of them, like their lungs or their muscles, that they are dispensed from ritual keening over the obvious. Bassani's protagonists, like Proust's Marcel, are almost always on the margin of the world that they naturally, longingly tend to think of as theirs, and for the same reason; class—middle. In the case of Bassani's people, there is usually another barrier: Jewish origin. And nothing heightens their perceptions like their sense of being a social anomaly.

Behind the Door is a novel of adolescence in the Ferrara of 1930—without girls, without much sexual activity, but tense with that almost willed, that dutiful obsession of which one is always aware in Italy. Only the names of people and places, and the hindsight knowledge of history, persuade one that it is not a novel of one's own adolescence in the Philadelphia of 1930. Except, of course, for the characteristically greater maturity of mind and manners that were so impressive when one's refugee contemporaries began to arrive a few years later and that is still equally impressive in the present generation.

In this short but densely alive novel—really a novella—of self-contempt and self-betrayal, the narrator is impotent to open the door of his closest connections, the anguished bonds between him and his mother, between him and his unwanted sycophant-turned-dominator, between him and his acknowledged rival for the leadership of their class in the *liceo*. That intense self-hatred is not what has been so glibly called Jewish self-hatred; it is anything but parochial. It is the premonitory self-hatred of the youth already bearing the guilt of the grown man who, unchanged, will still know corruption intuitively when it brushes him and know, too, his incapacity to denounce it or even to pull back his hands. The rot and the betrayals among the boys are smaller only in scope than the more dramatic rot and treasons of their elders and their adult selves. Literally behind a door for the very purpose, at one point the "I" of the novel is compelled to recognize the multiple betrayals that beset everyman; and the sudden certainty that this is the future is permanently paralyzing.

A parable of fascism? To put *Behind the Door* into that pigeonhole is too easy. In the world of Bassani's creation, in all his work, fascism is in essence the 20th-century guise of that extranatural force that informs classic tragedy. It is only one panel of the door that seemed to shelter the Finzi-Continis, the protagonists of the Ferrara stories, the narrator of this novel, and that at the same time walled off the Other.

I said that William Weaver's translation was the artistic peer of the novel. Bassani's style, in Italian, has a naturalness and a flow that are highly deceiving: one can imagine few novelists more difficult to transpose into an English comparable to their original. But William Weaver meets the very first requisite for a first-rate translator: he really knows his own language. He must always have been thinking simultaneously in Italian and English as he worked on *Behind the Door*, and the result is a book that does not seem at all to have been translated. And yet, if one knows Bassani's language, one feels

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one is reading in the original Italian. What is even more difficult is to convey convincingly in English the lilts, the rhythms, the idiosyncrasies of spoken Italian—in particular, the tricks of noun and pronoun with which, in Italian as in French, such a variety of emphases and shades of meaning can be so precisely achieved. Steeped as he is in the world of this novel, Weaver has lifted it bodily, without once interrupting its breathing, into an English garment as elegantly natural as the Italian in which Bassani originally clothed it.

There is an art to editing, too, and it consists largely in knowing when to let a writer or a translator alone. Some spellings, some punctuations in this book will seem strange to many readers, so often barred by copy editors from the refinements of English prose. The editors of *Behind the Door* knew that they were handling a work of art, and they would no more have subjected it to their own notions than, say, a dealer in paintings would have undertaken to improve on Modigliani.

This is a singularly felicitous combination, this very beautiful little novel. One cavils only at the fact that readers of English have had to wait eight years for this book since its publication in Italy. □

THE FALLING APART OF TIME

My brain is beside me
or on the glass table
looking or itself looking like
a dropped watch.

Everywhere, I mean near me,
the parts
or loose connections fall about.
A wheel is moving, or rolling,
into an object which collapses.

That too takes time.

My grandfather's watch
was gold.
It ran through him through all the states
into a long pocket,
his gentleman's trousers.

In more recent times
I do the watch trick:
my smallest hand,
the second hand,
falls off;
my crystal,
all in fragments,
catches light
&
cuts.
And my movements,
all my fine movements,
my jewels and bearings,
wind down and

spring shut.

Barry Wallenstein

Green Visor, Striped Bathing Suit

PATRIOTISM, INC. AND OTHER TALES. *By Paul van Ostaijen. University of Massachusetts Press. 170 pp. $9.50.*

RONALD DE FEO
Mr. De Feo's short stories have appeared in the Transatlantic, Massachusetts, North American *and* Roanoke Reviews.

The novelist E. M. Beekman (author of *Lameduck)* and the University of Massachusetts Press joined forces to issue this slender, though terribly crowded volume —the tightly spaced print is maddening —of quirky, curious prose pieces by Paul van Ostaijen, a Flemish writer and poet of the post-World War I era. A number of the shorter pieces as well as the Dadaist film script, "Bankruptcy Jazz," have been published before in "little magazines," but the majority of the writings are making their first appearance in English.

Van Ostaijen was born in Belgium in 1896. He engaged in political activism during World War I, was jailed for writing a number of rebellious articles, and eventually went into voluntary exile in Berlin, where he met and was influenced by various Dadaists. His stay in that city, however, was not a pleasant one. His writing attracted little attention, it brought him no money, and he was forced to take odd jobs. He barely managed to support himself, and he turned to friends and acquaintances for financial help. He also turned to drugs. In a number of his poems and prose pieces the drug influence is evident (notable in this collection is "Aquarelle" and "Curious Attack," brief, abstract descriptions of color-filled hallucinations, and "The General," a long piece in which the narrator, himself the general, suggests, among other things, that armies should use cocaine). Van Ostaijen finally returned to Belgium in 1921, published, at his brother's expense, a volume of poetry, *Occupied City* (which, according to Mr. Beekman, is something of a masterpiece), and served with the allied occupation forces in Germany. He returned home again, worked at various odd jobs, continued to write, and at last began to be recognized. In the spring of 1927 van Ostaijen became seriously ill. He entered a private sanatorium, and he died there of tuberculosis, less than six months later.

Van Ostaijen's prose pieces are departures from the traditional short story. By and large, the characters in them are extremely thin. Now, the short story is a highly concentrated form, but the traditional short-story writer usually tries to indicate a certain depth and complexity of character. Van Ostaijen's people are vague. We remain distant from them. While we may find some interest in their predicaments, listen to their strange words, follow their odd actions, we can't fully understand why they act as they do, nor can we fully understand how their limited, lopsided worlds have come into being. Except for the somewhat atypical piece, "The Kept Hotel Key," which traces the fall of a dissatisfied, uncertain sensualist, the stories have no plots in the traditional sense. Instead of one clearly delineated scene leading to another, we have an absurd, illogical position or opinion explored and extended until it reaches an illogical conclusion. In "Ika Loch's Brothel," for example, Madame Ika is notorious for mismatching client and prostitute; she believes that opposites attract. So she pairs thin women with fat men, fat with thin, young with old. Her clients are less than delighted. One day a "masterly sex murder" occurs in her establishment. The clients have a change of heart: if a sensational murder has occurred on the premises, the brothel can't be as unstimulating as they have imagined. Some clients conclude that she is a very subtle professional, that if she seems "to make a mistake in their desires with such utter conviction . . . she must have very good reasons indeed." So Ika continues to follow her theory, mismatching her customers. But now they don't complain: "They no longer attempted to practice their sexual preferences objectively. Let Ika Loch have her way—didn't she possess the key to the most secret of secrets?" Dissatisfaction then becomes a norm, and incompetence is rewarded.

The piece creates a topsy-turvy world that bears an uncomfortable resemblance to our own. Van Ostaijen mocks logic (the name "Ika Loch" is a play on the Dutch *logika)* and psychoanalysis. But for all its cleverness, the story is unsatisfying. We can't quite believe that

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Ika's clients could be so stupid, that they could tolerate and even welcome dissatisfaction. Van Ostaijen requires the reader to suspend disbelief beyond the call of duty. As a result, the story is too obviously mechanical. One might say, at the risk of sounding tipsy, that there is not enough logic in the clients' illogical position.

A similar comment can be made about "The City of Builders." In this tale it is not a small group of men that has accepted an absurd situation but rather an entire city. Van Ostaijen imagines a city in which it is a crime to destroy buildings. If a citizen wishes to build a new house, he must erect it on vacant land. He cannot tear down his old house in order to build a new one. In fact, if his old house is crumbling he must prop it up. A number of citizens eventually do protest the city policy and organize an anti-building movement, but the movement is soon crushed. The loyal citizens would like to execute the rebels in a square, but there are no squares left in the city; buildings occupy all the land. Again, in this piece, the reader can admire van Ostaijen's imagination. But again, he feels that the author has created a situation that is simply too strained. The story doesn't have much bite because it is too close to mere whimsy. Above all, van Ostaijen's portrayal of this absurd city is neither clear nor concrete. When Kafka tells us that Gregor Samsa awoke one morning to find himself transformed into a gigantic insect, we can believe in the metamorphosis because of the detailed description of a man functioning as a great beetle. Van Ostaijen's piece is lacking in just such necessary detail.

"The Prison in Heaven" is somewhat more satisfactory. Here van Ostaijen provides just enough details about his protagonist's ridiculous position for us to accept it. The man who has spent twenty years in prison and is now free, simply cannot enjoy his freedom. He has grown too accustomed to prison life. He tries to find things that will remind him of his former existence:

> First and foremost he bought himself a green eyeshade for his eyes. He thus imitated as best he could his prison visor from the good old days. His greatest joy was the public swimming pool. Not the pleasure of swimming. He abhorred water. But the white and red striped bathing suit was a great joy to him. He didn't even go into the water. He would sit on a bench until the guards told him that he had been sitting there long enough and that he had better get a move on. No matter how painful it was to leave his bathing suit, this warning was very agreeable to him. He simply loved guards.

The details, the little surprises give the passage its humor and make the free prisoner real for us; his longing for his old way of life and his pathetic efforts to partially re-create that life seem quite human and understandable. Unfortunately, the tale gets very broad—the prison-happy ex-convict achieves hero status and then becomes a political pawn —and it lapses into whimsy.

The other long pieces in the collection all have sparks of wit, and reflect an original and inventive mind, but they generally start with a bang and end with a whimper. The title story, "Patriotism, Inc.," in which two nations, fearful of internationalists, join together to promote chauvinism, goes on at too great a length and labors its points, as does "The General," already mentioned. The short prose pieces vary in quality and interest. "Nicolas," in which a man becomes aware that he cannot escape from his name, from his own special identity, is, I think, the best of the lot—it is quiet and haunting; the reader remembers it.

E. M. Beekman probably did not have an easy time translating into English van Ostaijen's colloquial Dutch, but the reader wouldn't know it. The translation is very good. The biographical information he provides is helpful, but his general statements on satire and satirists seem heavy-handed and unnecessary. Beekman begins his introduction somewhat too dramatically: "This country is a fool of history. Never before has there been such an unrelenting succession of absurdities, ranging from the monstrous to the petty, with such dismaying acceleration." It may all be true enough, but I always feel slightly uneasy when someone tries to convince me that this century, this generation, this last year, has been the worst in the history of the world. Beekman goes on to make some very questionable remarks: "The technique and attitude of humor are the highest form of expression and of awareness," and the satirist is "kin to the ideal revolutionary."

None of this is calculated to persuade the reader that the claims Beekman makes for his author are justified. Indeed, they appear to be extravagant. Perhaps van Ostaijen is the poet Beekman says he is—we cannot judge the matter before we see some examples of his poetry. But on the basis of the prose pieces in this volume, it is hard to understand how Beekman can rate the author "among the foremost satirists of this age." Paul van Ostaijen is interesting enough to merit one's attention, but he promises more than he delivers. He is imaginative and original, but nevertheless a minor figure. □

FILMS/Robert Hatch

Another reviewer has called *Cries and Whispers* Ingmar Bergman's *Three Sisters,* and I find the comparison illuminating because it seems to me that that is exactly what the picture is not. Whereas the play is a domestic tragedy, the film is a psychological depressant, and that is so, I think, because the impulse behind it is not creative but manipulative.

There are indeed three sisters. Agnes (Harriet Andersson) is dying of an abdominal cancer and her sisters, Maria (Liv Ullmann) and Karin (Ingrid Thulin) have come back to the family home to be with her in the last days. Agnes is gentle and dim, in the manner of chronic invalids; she becomes vivid only in moments of terror and intense pain. Maria, beautiful, open-faced, but tight around the lips, is emotionally arrested; she is sexually self-indulgent, mentally lazy, timid and as restless as a child without occupation. Bergman, rather obvious on the point, has her sleep with a doll and mouth her thumb. Karin has been frozen into a chatelaine by the acid indifference of her husband (he is George Arlin and appears briefly in what seems to be an impersonation of Lionel Barrymore as Scrooge); she is hysterically incapable of human contact.

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HARRY S. TRUMAN
(May 8, 1884 - December 26, 1972)

He was probably the greatest intellectual of our time. Because he used his mind (alpha region) to arrive at his decisions.

Some will dispute that he was an intellectual. They will point to the fact that he did not express himself in the large esoteric words that have become the trademark of our cult of pseudo-intellectuals.

Others will say that the "What's in it for me?" boys were more intellectual because they spent more mental effort in pragmatically "trying to get the most mileage for themselves out of everything."

Most of these, however, were sidetracked into their gamma (theta) regions, and really made their decisions on what humored their egos. Most of their intellectual effort consisted of rationalization, trying to find pious excuses for selfish activities.

Harry believed in using his mind, not boasting about it. And his spirit will live in many things which he thought should be a service to humanity, rather than a monument to the name of Truman.

D. KORETZ, P.O. Box 167, Portland, Ore. 97207

RAGGEDY ANDY

The steady bleeding of a vein—
that's working forty-nine weeks a year, year
after year . . .
No slashed wrists here—
I like the slow feeling of the blade.
I'm filling me up with busyness like sand,
growing into a giant Andy doll.
I can feel them sewing up the seams . . .
Soon. No room. No room.
Thoughts go; feelings, too,
pumped out with the air of memos and reports.

My eyes are buttons, my mouth a line.

M. Steingesser

There is also Anna (Kary Sylway), the family servant of many years, whose daughter has died and who, in the night, nurses the suffering Agnes against her naked bosom. She is mutely jealous of the other sisters and after the death of Agnes fantasizes an episode in which the corpse cries out and she once more crawls into the bed and bares her breast.

Maria, after the death but before the funeral, cannot endure the solitude of the house; she manages to crack Karin's reserve, unloosing a flood of hatred and remorse that both frightens and entertains her. Next morning, after the burial, she rejects Karin's assumption that they have entered a new realm of understanding, thus leaving her older sister even more isolated than she had been before.

All of this, obviously, is painful material, and I have omitted some atrocious details, since it would seem to me sensationalism to recount them. However, the effect of the picture was not to move me to pity or terror but rather to resentment. And that is because I feel, rightly or wrongly, that Bergman does not solicit my allegiance to his characters but my admiration for his managerial skill. The film proceeds less by relationships among the women than in a series of private sessions with the director. There is something doglike about Bergman's troupe—and particularly about the women—that I find increasingly estranging. They are able, and prepared, to do anything he asks of them, however bizarre, repulsive or self-debasing; and when they have assumed the required attitude, the camera (perhaps the most silkily intrusive camera in the movie profession) sweeps in triumphantly to snap a merciless close-up for the master's portfolio. I keep imagining that, off camera, the successful pupil receives a pat and a sugar lump.

I find this cold and sterile work because, for all its patient training to perfection, it contains nothing that enlists or informs me. Ask what Bergman seeks to convey about the bases of human relationships and you are handed one of those Renaissance charts of emotional physiognomy—how to depict lust, greed, avarice, terror, sloth, etc. There is more to life, and more to art, than this sort of dexterity.

Undoubtedly that is not how it seems to Bergman. Undoubtedly he is driven to express through extraordinarily compliant lay figures his conviction that man is a creature hunted by pain and guilt and religious longings. But the irony, it seems to me, is that in pursuit of this morose vision of our common experience, he has lost what is important about it—that it is shared and human. So the paradox: the more superbly Bergman indoctrinates his actors, the less I believe in his people. I cannot concern myself with how Agnes and Karin and Maria feel toward one another because I am so curious as to how Harriet Andersson, Ingrid Thulin and Liv Ullmann feel toward Bergman. But of course that story does not get told. □

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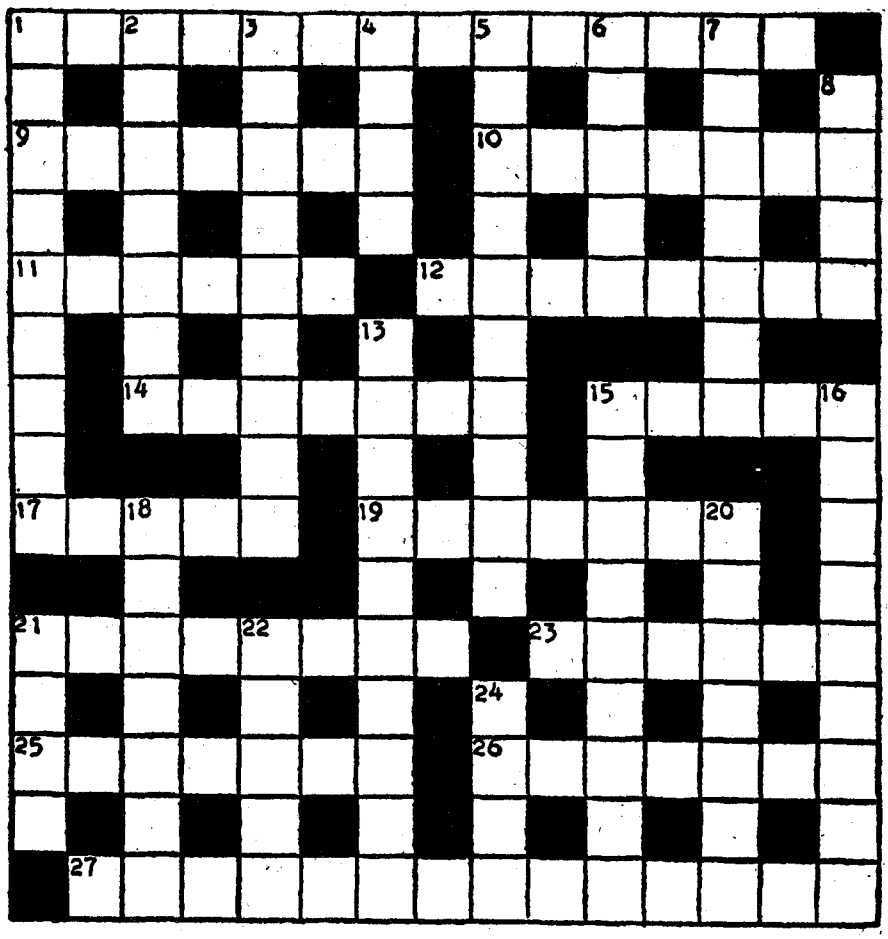

ACROSS

1 See 21 down
9 Father's not quite true to form, where older ones are said to be put out. (7)
10 When up late, a sort that should be a high spot possibly goes rather flat. (7)
11 The end of the '51 eleven, and the beginning of reform in sovereign remedy. (6)
12 A remarkable exploit in the act of being beaten. (8)
14 They could be storied people who pass on stories themselves. (7)
15 A regular walk in early spring? (5)
17 Turn about one in the city. (5)
19 You probably don't get square with the conclusion of such a Chinese puzzle. (7)
21 Chatters long and idly, as a friend testifies. (8)
23 One might hear them laugh, if he's any trouble. (6)
25 and 8 down Made to pay off a debt, with the cash supply going down? (7,4)
26 Perhaps for the rest of the hike it should be good advice to a comedian. (3-4)
27 Steam-driven set of attention-getting mechanisms, possibly. (14)

DOWN

1 Carry-out utensil? (9)
2 and 22 down Speaking of the resistance movement? Certainly not! (One is struck by it, for example.) (7,5)
3 Learning of the publication about an old city uprising? (9)
4 She had taken off for shelter, in one version or another. (4)
5 Opens grips the hard way, using too much force. (10)
6 Seemingly I have some standing, though far from happy about it. (5)
7 Article confusing all but the personal part of 6, mainly for show. (7)
13 For most of the conservative side, straightforward. (10)
15 Confused Dr. Tom with Mary, hence the ultimate suffering. (9)
16 Two portions of fish should make one complete, with the remaining order perhaps being only for heels. (4-5)
18 What might be drawn when showing a loss? (Put a new coat on inside.)
20 Wind up with this half-day, etc. (7)
21 and 1 across Not those who cancel stamps, though they might have made the scene. (4-14)
24 Declines to get shot and points around.

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1471

ACROSS: 1 Called to mind; 9 Color-blind; 10 Foil; 11 Inventor; 12 Canada; 13 Aryan; 15 Norseman; 16 Adoption; 19 Mocks; 21 and 23 A bed of roses; 22 Mariners; 24 Bull; 25 Longshanks; 26 Restlessness. DOWN: 2 Around and about; 3 Loosely; 4 Debit; 5 Omicron; 6 Indecorum; 7 Defense; 8 Wild-cat strikes; 14 Nailfiles; 17 Peddler; 18 Nominal; 20 Contain.

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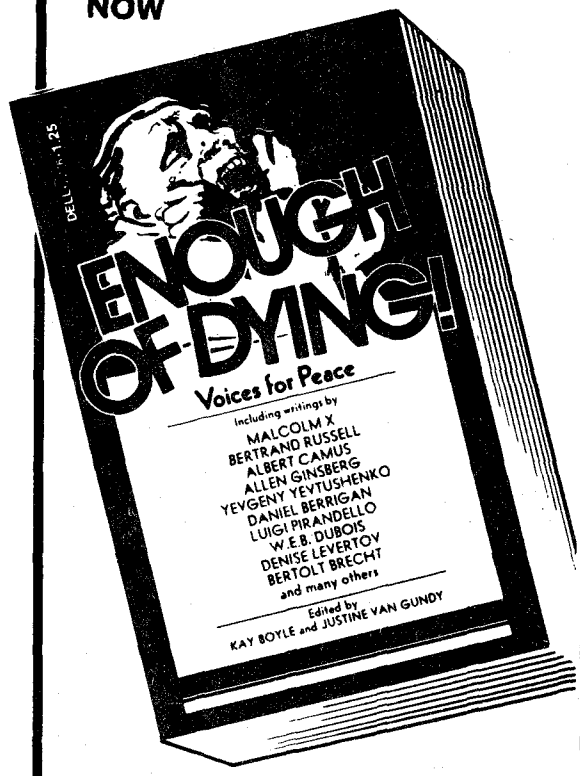

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